

NOTES
ON THE
BOOK OF THE
REVELATION

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ON THE

BOOK OF THE REVELATION.

BY

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EDITOR OF "THE ENGLISHMAN'S BIBLE."

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P R E F A C E.

ABOUT the year 1840, my attention was directed to the consideration of the return of the Lord Jesus, and especially to the Book of the Revelation. I found there were a variety of conflicting opinions on these subjects. But being desirous of ascertaining the truth from the Scriptures only, I applied myself to the study of the inspired originals; in dependence on the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and in the presence and fear of God.

The following Notes on the Revelation are some of the conclusions founded on this basis, which each succeeding year has tended to mature and confirm.

THOMAS NEWBERRY.

ALEXANDRA VILLA,
WESTON-SUPER-MARE.



THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

CHAPTER I.

Verse 1. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him."

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, not which God gave concerning Him, but which God gave unto Him; thus removing the veil which hung over the future, both as to time and to eternity.

In the Divine actings there is order, harmony, and unity. The three persons in the adorable Trinity ever act in unison, but each in their own order: everything originates with the Father, is accomplished through the Son, and by the Holy Ghost.

When Jesus was on earth, He could say, "I have not spoken of [*or from*] Myself; but *the* Father which sent Me, ~~He~~ gave Me commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (John xii. 49). After His resurrection it was through the Holy Ghost that He gave commandments unto the apostles whom He had chosen. Even so it is here. The Lord Jesus received the revelation from the Father, and by angelic ministry communicated it to His servant John, who wrote it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

"To show unto His servants [*bond-servants*] things which must shortly come to pass."

It is as bond or bought servants, the entire property of Him who has redeemed us to God by His blood, that we are prepared to enter spiritually into these things—things beginning to have their accomplishment in the symbolic history of the Church—chapters ii. and iii., and going on to the end.

* The text commented on throughout is that of the Authorised Version; and the italics, pronouns in Old English, with the emendations in brackets, is according to "The Large Print Edition of 'The Englishman's Bible,'" also known as "The Newberry Bible."

“And He sent and signified *it* by His angel unto His servant John.”

“Signified,” that is, made known by signs or symbols. Under the Mosaic economy instruction was given by means of TYPES, the prophets largely employed FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE, and the Lord Jesus taught by PARABLE. The language of this book is a language of SYMBOLS, and the objects shown are symbolic; but when the symbols are interpreted, it is in plain literal language.

Verse 2. “Who bare record of [testified] the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.”

The threefold testimony—from God, through Christ, and by the visions shown by the angel.

Verse 3. “Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy.”

There is blessing connected with the reading of the entire word of God, but there is an especial blessing pronounced on those who read this portion of it, the Spirit of God probably foreseeing how much it would be neglected—a blessing on the reader, whether in private or in public, and a blessing on the hearer; for all may not be able to read, but all may hear.

“And keep those things which are written therein.”

There is no greater mistake than to suppose that this portion of God’s word is not practical. On the contrary, it is God’s magnifying glass, showing principles and actions of daily experience in all their *ultimate issues*, and full development, of stupendous magnitude; teaching us practically what to avoid, and what to follow.

“For the time is at hand.”

The history of the Church on earth, which commenced at Pentecost, and will continue till the return of the Lord Jesus to receive it to Himself, is given in symbol in the second and third chapters; and as the present dispensation advances the coming of the Lord Jesus, the great tribulation, and the manifestation of the Son of Man, the kingdom and glory, draw nearer and nearer.

Verse 4. “John to the seven churches which are in Asia.”

Seven is the number of completeness or perfection. Seven of the then existing churches of Asia are selected in Divine wisdom, and arranged in a certain order, that they might become symbolic representatives of the whole Church during the present dispensation.

“Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come.”

“Him which is,” in the Greek, the present participle with the article, signifying “He who always is ;” “and which was,” imperfect tense, expressing continuance in the past—“He who always was ;” “and which is to come,” the present participle with the article—“Ever the coming One.” This is the Greek translation of the Hebrew title “Jehovah”—a title combining the past, the present, and the future in one word, and occurring about 7000 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, but only so translated about seven times in the Authorised Version.

“And from the seven Spirits which are before His throne.”

The usual form of benediction is as in 1 Cor. i. 3, “Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ ;” omitting the mention of the Holy Ghost. As the Holy Spirit is the inditer of the apostolic epistles, He omits His own name. Here the Lord Jesus gives the Revelation, and He mentions the Spirit before Himself ; as also when on earth He gives the Holy Ghost especial honour (see Matt. xii. 31, 32). The Holy Ghost is not here spoken of as the Comforter, sent from the Father and the Son, to be the companion and instructor of the Church during the present dispensation, but as the seven Spirits which are before Jehovah’s throne—the Eternal Spirit in all His perfectness, sovereignty, and glory.

Verse 5. “And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, and the first begotten of [*or from among*] the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.”

The faithful witness on earth and from heaven, as to the things on the earth ; the first begotten in resurrection now ; and to be manifested as prince of the kings of the earth hereafter.

Thus far the benediction ; now comes the Spirit-taught response.

“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His *own* blood, and *hath* made us kings and priests unto God and His Father ; to Him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

This reminds us of Eph. v. 25, 26 : “Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify *and* cleanse it with *the* washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church :” Christ’s love in the past in laying down His life for us ; His present action sanctifying and cleansing, not with water only, but with water and blood (1 John v. 6), and the prospect of the future when, Christ having presented to Himself the Church in glory, will also associate her with Himself in His Melchizedek kingdom and priesthood.

Verse 7. "Behold, He cometh with clouds ; and every eye shall see Him, and they *also* which pierced Him : and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so [*or Yea*], Amen."

This is not His coming for, but with, His Church ; not as the Bright and Morning Star, but as the Sun of Righteousness.

At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him, there is no intimation in Scripture that any eye will see Him but those who meet Him to be for ever with Him ; but when He comes as Son of Man, to establish His earthly kingdom, "every eye shall see Him."

Then will be accomplished both Zech. xii. 10-14 and Rev. vi. 12-17. Israel will then discover, in the Son of man manifested in glory, their once despised and rejected Messiah, whom they had crucified, but looking on Him in true and genuine repentance, a fountain will be opened for them for sin and uncleanness, through His atoning blood and sanctifying Spirit. The apostate nations of Christendom and the unbelieving portions of the world will see in the tokens of His appearing the commencement of the day of Divine wrath and of eternal ruin.

"Even so, Amen," is the language of acquiescence ; not so much the language of fervent desire as in Rev. xxii. 20, "Even so [*or Yea*], COME, Lord Jesus."

Verse 8. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* beginning and *the* ending, saith the LORD [*or Jehovah*], which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

The Jehovah titles.

Verse 9. "¶ John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience [*or endurance*] of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Thus God overrules the malice of the enemies of the truth, as in the case of Daniel in Babylon, Bunyan in Bedford Jail, and Luther in the Wartburg, for the accomplishment of deeper purposes of wisdom and of love.

Verse 10. "I was in *the* Spirit on the Lord's day."

We must distinguish between the Lord's day as here, and the day of Jehovah, which is so frequently the subject of prophetic testimony.

The first day of the week on which the Lord Jesus arose from the dead bears the impress of His name as the Lord's day. And the supper which commemorates His atoning death is also stamped with

His name as the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. xi. 20), both which are peculiar to the present dispensation. After the Lord has come, and received His Church to Himself, the seventh day Sabbath will again be observed, see Matt. xxiv. 20: "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on *the Sabbath day*," and also throughout the Millennial period (Isa. lxvi. 23). In the seventieth prophetic week of Daniel, the week of Antichrist, the daily sacrifice will take the place of the Lord's Supper (Dan. ix. 27; Rev. xi. 1).

During the Millennial period the sacrificial offerings according to the arrangements given in the prophecy of Ezekiel will be observed.

As the seventh day, the Sabbath, is typical of Millennial rest, so the Lord's day, the eighth, is typical of heavenly, resurrection, and eternal rest. By the Holy Spirit John is lifted up above surrounding things, and carried forward into the eternal rest of resurrection.

"And heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet."

"As of a trumpet." Giving notes, intelligible only to the initiated and instructed ear.

"Behind me." In spirit John is in the eternal rest, but his attention is called back to the things of time.

Verse 11. "Saying, *I* am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."

These seven churches are selected from all the assemblies of believers which were on earth at that time, arranged in a certain order, and certain things noticed in each, so as to form what is styled in verse 20 "the mystery"—the deep and hidden truth—conveyed by these symbols.

Verse 12. "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned——"

John, in spirit, is in resurrection rest, and is there shown a retrospective view of the seven churches in Asia, and, through them, the history of the whole Church of God during the present dispensation; but he sees all this in spirit as things of the past, not as things to come. It is a sight of the Church's history, as we shall see it from the glory, when we in reality take the standpoint which John in spirit took.

"I saw seven golden lampstands."

This is the Divine emblem for the Church of God on earth during the present night-time of the world's history. In general, the term given by the Spirit is "the Church of God." It is a Divine institution, hence

represented by golden LAMPSTANDS. They are never called *candlesticks* in the original Scriptures.

The burning of a *candle* points rather to the thought of self-consumption, as by fasting and mental toil, which consumes the body, and is by some counted meritorious. The LAMPSTAND is a receptacle for the lamp, which can only burn as supplied with oil: an emblem of the Church of God, giving light from God, by the Spirit.

Note the threefold expression—"heard a voice behind me," "turned," "and being turned, I saw;" thus, in symbol, looking back from eternity into time, upon the night scene on earth.

A night scene—lampstands and stars. It is "man's day" now (1 Cor. iv. 3, margin), but God's night; yet "the night is far spent, the day is at hand."

What makes it night? Jesus says, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world;" but when He expired upon the cross, the light of His presence set behind Calvary. His absence makes it night.

The watchers for the morning are waiting for the "Bright and Morning Star," the harbinger of the coming Millennial day.

"The morning cometh, and also the night." After the Morning Star has risen, and before the Sun of Righteousness ariseth with healing in His beams, there will be darkness such as never has been—a darkness of which that in Egypt was the type. "Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people."

Verse 13. "And in *the* midst of the seven lampstands *one* like unto *the* Son of Man."

Christ, the centre of the universal Church, not only of the separate assemblies gathered unto His name.

"Like unto *the* Son of Man" (without the article). It characterises Him as one who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities—able to sympathise. When used as His title "the Son of Man," there are in the Greek two articles distinguishing Him as the Word made flesh and tabernacling among us, in His sinless humanity: a title which when used in connection with His second Advent makes a distinction between His coming as Son of God from heaven to receive His own, and His manifestation as Messiah in glory to receive His kingdom.

"Clothed with a garment down to the foot."

Probably the long blue robe of the ephod (Exod. xxviii. 31, 32); that which sets forth the perfection of His heavenly priesthood. "High Priest of our confession."

“ And girt about the paps with a golden girdle.”

Not about the loins, for activity and strength in service, but about the paps or breasts : the girdle of faithfulness and truth in the activities of His heart, the divine faithfulness of His affections.

Verse 14. “ And His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow.”

A similar figure to that in Dan. vii 9, characterising Him as the Ancient of Days, whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.

“ And His eyes *were* as a flame of fire.”

Piercing, penetrating, and discovering the true character of all things.

Verse 15. “ And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.”

“ Feet,” emblematic of procedure, “ brass,” of strength, and the “ furnace,” of purification, showing the stability and refined purity of all His ways.

“ And His voice as *the* sound of many waters.”

As, when standing by a mighty cataract, a united volume of sound is at first heard, but as the ear listens a vast concourse of sounds are distinguished, uniting, blending, or distinct in endless variety.

Verse 16. “ And He had in His right hand seven stars.”

Another figure suited to the night-time. These stars are probably planets, shining by reflected light. So the messengers of Christ to the churches, rising in spirit above the earth, and seeing Him that is invisible, reflect His light ; and as the lark in early morn ascends—

“ Till the unrisen sun
Shines on his speckled breast.”

Such ministry is sustained by the right hand of Immanuel.

“ And out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.”

See Heb. iv. 12, 13. His words are penetrating and all-discovering.

“ And His countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength.”

For He is the brightness of the Divine glory (Heb. i. 3).

Verse 17. “ And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.”

The manifestation of Divine glory in the person of Immanuel is withering and killing to the flesh.

“ And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not ;
I am the first and the last ; and *I am* He that liveth, and was

dead : and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen ; and have the keys of hadēs and of death.”

When we take our place at the feet of Jesus, the flesh withered as in death, we learn the lesson, “My strength is made perfect in weakness.”

This is the last of those precious “Fear nots” which occur so frequently on the inspired page, and this time it comes from the lips of Jesus in resurrection glory. There is no need for fear if we are down there, in the place of death to all that is in ourselves. It is when we are on the pinnacle of prosperity, and when the flesh is flourishing, we have need to fear.

“Fear not ; I am the first and the last.” The reason for not fearing is not simply where we are, or what we are, but what He is.

“He that liveth, and was dead ; and, behold, I am alive for evermore.” The Jehovah character and title of the Lord Jesus, in resurrection, redemption, and new creation glory.

“And have the keys of hadēs and of death.” Hadēs signifies unseen, or the invisible abode of the dead. Fear not premature death. The door can only be opened by the warder (John xi. 25, 26).

Verse 19. “Write the things which thou hast seen.”

That is, the vision of the seven golden lampstands, and the Lord Jesus in the midst. This is the frontispiece of the book, like as the burning bush was of Exodus. We have here the first and divinely given division of the book of Revelation.

“And the things which are.”

The second division : the things noticed in the second and third chapters—the mystery of the seven golden lampstands, and the seven stars. The history of the Church in this present dispensation, and in its sevenfold aspect, from Pentecost throughout its seven stages of development, until the Lord’s return.

“And the things which shall be hereafter” [are about to be after these things].

The third division of the book. And this threefold division is the clue to the clear and unmistakable understanding of the whole. There are things which cannot take place during the present dispensation, because not in harmony with its character ; but which must be fulfilled after its close. In the Church there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile, for all are one in Christ Jesus. But in the scenes which follow, the broad line of demarcation between them is distinctly marked—at the very commencement 144,000 being sealed expressly as belonging to the twelve tribes.

Verse 20. "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are *the* angels [messengers] of the seven churches : and the seven lampstands which thou sawest are *the* seven churches."

Symbols are not to be taken literally, but to be interpreted as symbols. But the interpretation is given in plain ordinary language. It is of the utmost importance to understand this, and not to take the symbol as literal, nor the interpretation as symbolic. "The seven lampstands," these are symbolic; "are the seven churches," this is the literal interpretation.

CHAPTER II.

THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH IN EPHEBUS.

Verse 1. "Unto the angel [*or* messenger] of the church of EPHEBUS write."

This message was first addressed to the then existing Church of God in Ephesus, directed to an individual there, who was thus put into the place of a messenger from Christ in the glory to that church. It was doubtless an exact and faithful presentation of the truth there and then to that particular church. There is also something deeper and more lasting, as intimated by the 20th verse of the preceding chapter—"the mystery of the seven churches."

These seven churches in Asia were selected in infinite wisdom, arranged in a certain order, certain particulars noticed, and others omitted, so as to present a complete history of the Church of this dispensation from the apostle's time to the return of the Lord Jesus, the heavenly Bridegroom, to receive the Church, His Bride, to Himself.

The more these messages to the churches are compared with the recognised facts of ecclesiastical history, and with existing things, the more will the divine perfection of these addresses be apparent.

The church in Ephesus is placed at the top of the list.

There are two epistles to the church in Ephesus—one from Paul, the prisoner in Rome; the other from John, the banished one in Patmos.

When Paul wrote, the church in Ephesus was in its most "desirable" condition, though Paul foresaw its danger (Acts xx. 29, 30). When John wrote, it was fallen from its first estate and pre-eminence. Ephesus means "Desirable;" it may also mean a "Throwing or

Casting Down." It stands here as the representative of the Church at the time immediately succeeding its first planting.

"These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in *the* midst of the seven golden lampstands."

The Church as planted by the energy of the Spirit of God at first was in its true order. Ministry was upheld by the right hand of the Lord Jesus; He gave the evangelists, pastors, and teachers; and these gifts and their exercise were entirely under His control. Ministry had not then ceased to be that high and sacred thing which God intended it to be. These planets in this early night season, shining with unclouded splendour, received their light from the Sun of Righteousness, and reflected it clearly on the earth below. The lampstands were golden; each individual church was not distinguished by some denominational character; they were churches of God, owned of God, and witnesses for Him in the earth.

The Church also as a whole was that which God designed it to be—gathered round the one exalted Lord: He was the true Church centre. The murmur which had begun to be heard, "I am of Paul," &c., had not arisen; Jesus was the centre Sun of the whole system. In the first chapter He appears standing; here He is walking. He is as the high priest in the Temple, walking amidst the lampstands and trimming the lamps

Verses 2 and 3. "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience [*or* patient endurance], and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for My name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted."

There were works of faith, labours of love, and patience of hope. God's sanctuary was kept pure from moral and doctrinal evil and false assumption; in outward order perfect.

Verse 4. "Nevertheless, I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

The angel or messenger is looked at throughout these epistles as the representative of the church to which he is the messenger, and the church is addressed through him.

Sad is it when an individual loses his first love—the pardoned and saved sinner's ardent love to his Redeemer and Saviour; sadder still when a church loses its first love.

What was the first love of the church in Ephesus? We learn what

it was from Paul's epistle to that church. The love of her espousals ; the love of the Bride to the heavenly Bridegroom, who loved her and gave Himself for her, raised her up together, and seated her in heavenly places in Himself, as members of His body, the purchase of His blood, and sealed by His Spirit—that great mystery, Christ and the Church. Has this first love of the Church ever been regained? Not only the church in Ephesus, but the Church in general, has left her first love.

Paul was jealous over the Church with a godly jealousy. He had espoused it to one Husband, that he might present it as a chaste virgin to Christ. But he had his fears that, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so the Church, the antitype, should be corrupted from her first simplicity—fears too truly verified. "While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." The Church has adopted as her "creed," not "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," but "He is coming to judge." True, within the last few years, the cry has again gone forth, and the slumbering virgins are being awakened to cry, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The addresses to the seven churches in Asia correspond with the teaching of the seven parables in Matt. xiii.; only in the parables it is more of the kingdom character; in the Revelation, the Church. Ephesus corresponds with the parable of the sower and the seed—the first sowing, and the first planting.

The course of the seven churches also corresponds with certain stages in the history of the kings of Judah and Israel. As Israel in the wilderness is typical of the wilderness condition of the people of God now, so Israel in the land is a type of the Church as associated with a risen Christ. Looked at in this light, the church of Ephesus, first planted and in its prime, will correspond with the kingdom of Solomon in its first fair glory.

The charge "thou hast left thy first love" in the *Greek* is not in the perfect tense, but in the aorist, and may be rendered "thou didst leave." It is not simply "because thou hast left," but "because thou didst leave." There was a period in the Church's history when this declension commenced.

Verse 5. "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works."

Remembrance, repentance, and doing the first works, when under the influence of the first love. This is the exhortation.

"Or else I *will* come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy lampstand out of his place, except thou repent."

He does not say, "I will extinguish thy lamp," but "remove thy lampstand out of his place"—its place of pre-eminence.

Verse 6. "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate."

Nicolaitanes—*i.e.*, victorious people.

The Epistle of Jude may give us the character of these deeds of the victorious people; such as "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only sovereign Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 4).

To be faithful, we have not only to love what Christ loves, but to hate what He hates.

Verse 7. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

The Spirit has a voice of instruction for the individual ear, and for all the churches, as well as for each particular church.

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in *the* midst of the paradise of God."

The overcomer is he who, giving heed to the word of approval, continues in what is approved; and also, heeding the word of instruction, reproof, or exhortation, obtains the mastery over what is disapproved of.

As the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so the Church has been corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Right to the tree of life was forfeited at first.

The promise to the overcomer is true to faith in spirit now, but the full realisation will be in eternity. As through listening to the voice of the serpent at first, Paradise was lost, and the right to the tree of life was forfeited; so by attending to the voice of the Spirit of God, the foretaste of those eternal joys which are at God's right hand for evermore are given by the Spirit, who is Himself the earnest of the inheritance which can never be forfeited or lost.

SMYRNA.

Verse 8. "And unto the messenger of the church in SMYRNA write."

Smyrna signifies myrrh; myrrh, bitter but fragrant. A beautiful emblem of sanctified affliction. Bitter to those who suffer; but afterwards working those peaceable fruits of righteousness which are so fragrant and well-pleasing to God.

In the church in Smyrna we have the symbolic history of the Church in the period immediately succeeding the days of the apostles.

The historic type is the reign of Rehoboam (1 Kings xii.). And

what a contrast between the bright reign of Solomon, and the turbulent reign of his son !

The second parable in Matt. xiii. also corresponds with this period : the time of mingling of the tares with the wheat—false professors uniting with the true, in the outward profession of Christianity.

“These things, saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.”

There is beautiful harmony between the state of things in the several churches and the titles by which the Lord is distinguished in the addresses.

When the Church was in its divinely appointed order, the title was : “He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden lampstands.” But now that the Church is coming into the deep waters of trial and persecution, the suited title selected presents Him as the once suffering and dying, but now living One. Heb. xii. 2, 3 will give us its interpretation and application : “Looking off unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith ; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame.”

Verse 9. “I know thy works, and tribulations, and poverty (but thou art rich).”

So we read in Heb. x. 34, they “took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance.” Poor indeed in this world, but rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. Having nothing, and yet possessing all things. In striking contrast with the church in Laodicea (chap. iii. 17, 18).

“And *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but *are the* synagogue of Satan” (*or the Adversary*).

According to Rom. ii. 28, 29, “He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly,” &c., “but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly,” &c. But here an outward profession is substituted for inward reality.

The tares profess themselves to be wheat.

Originally, the Jews were God’s people outwardly, and circumcision admitted to the outward privileges of the nation. And as such they were types of the Church of God, inwardly and spiritually (1 Cor. x. 1–11).

Where God has His Church, Satan has his synagogue. And there are men of the stamp of Simon Magus, duly baptized indeed, but who

have neither part nor lot in the matter, for their heart is not right in the sight of God.

The Church of God, "*ecclesia*," is a select assembly of called ones, chosen of God in eternity, redeemed by Christ in time, and quickened and indwelt by the Spirit of God. The synagogue of Satan, "*sunagoge*," like the "net" in Matt. xiii., is a gathering together of every kind.

"Satan" signifies "the Adversary;" similar to "the enemy" in Matt. xiii. 39, who sows the tares among the wheat.

Verse 10. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt [art about to suffer]: behold, the Devil [*Diabolus*] shall cast [is about to cast] *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days."

As the Adversary of God, Satan sets up his synagogue in opposition; as *Diabolus*, the false accuser, he stirs up persecution against the saints.

This tribulation, probably though a fact in the experience of the church in Smyrna, foreshadowed the terrible persecution of the Roman Pagan emperors in the second stage of the Church's history.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown [the victor's crown] of life."

The trial of faith, though it be tried with fire, will be found unto praise and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

The regal crown, the diadem, will be worn by every ransomed soul, for the blood of Christ has purchased it; but the victor's crown, the *stephanos*, will be given to the overcomer.

Verse 11. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

These addresses were given by Christ in vision to John, but it is the Spirit which now speaks through them to the anointed and opened ear.

A martyr's death may be the portion of the faithful witness here, but on such the second death hath no power.

PERGAMOS.

Verse 12. "And to the angel [messenger] of the church in PERGAMOS write."

"Pergamos" may either signify "elevation," "lifted up," or "actual marriage."

It marks the third stage of decline in the history of the Church. In Smyrna we see the world coming into the Church, and the enemy erecting his synagogue there. In Pergamos we have the Church going over to the world, and seeking a home there.

The corresponding parable in the thirteenth of Matthew, is that of "the grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field : which indeed is *the* least of all seeds ; but when it is grown, it is *the* greatest *among* herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

The Christian Church was at the first lowly, like a "spreading vine of low stature ;" but afterwards it became great with worldly greatness, and harboured all manner of abuses.

In the history of the kingdom of Israel, the reign of Jeroboam answers to this—with his house of high places, and imitation ritual (1 Kings xii. 26-33).

Pergamos marks the well-known era in history when the Church passed from under the fierce, but purifying, fires of Roman Pagan persecution, over to the enervating and corrupting patronage of Imperial Rome, at the time of Constantine the Great. Reminding us of Samson on the lap of Delilah.

Verse 12. "These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges."

There is now the need of the sharp penetrating and searching power of the word, and the Lord uses it.

Verse 13. "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's [the Adversary's] throne *is*."

Not only "thy works," but "thy dwelling-place." The Church had changed her residence, and removed from the valley to the mountain.

Satan had set up his rival SYNAGOGUE in the Church, but his THRONE is in the world. He is the god of this world, and the prince of the authority of the air. His patronage is more to be feared than his persecution. His smile is more withering than his frown.

"And thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith, even in *those* days wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr [or witness], who was slain among you, where Satan [or the Adversary] dwelleth."

The saints had been faithful under the fiercest persecution, but now there was a threefold form of danger to which they were exposed : Satan's SYNAGOGUE—the Adversary's imitation of religion ; Satan's THRONE—the Adversary's royal patronage ; and Satan's DWELLING-PLACE—the Adversary's companionship or neighbourhood.

Verse 14. "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

There are three stages in the downward path to ruin, noticed in Jude 11; "the way of Cain"—will worship, an altar decked with flowers and laden with fruit, but without a sacrifice; "the error of Balaam"—the service of the hireling, for reward; and "the gain-saying of Korah"—democracy in the Church, the flesh asserting its rights, to the setting aside of the divinely given gifts of the Spirit for the edifying of the saints.

And when the world pays the expenses of religion, what more natural than to claim the title to fellowship in the worship and the rule? And hence the danger of unhallowed communion with the world in what ought to be the spiritual worship of the Father, and loyal obedience to the Son, in the all-sufficient energy of the Spirit.

Verse 15. "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate."

It is the having in the midst those who hold false doctrine which is condemned. Here is a decline from the holy jealousy in discipline commended in the church in Ephesus (verse 2); a neglect to purge out the leaven of doctrines corrupting to the Church, and a toleration of those that held them. In connection with Ephesus, the DEEDS of the Nicolaitanes are mentioned as hated by the Lord; but here it is the DOCTRINE, and the PERSONS who hold it, and who tolerate it are condemned. For false doctrine is the root from which in due time, if allowed to remain, the evil fruits are sure to follow. Both the doctrine and the deeds are hateful in the eyes of the Lord; and those who tolerate the doctrine may be made answerable for the deeds.

Verse 17. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna."

The Spirit who inspired these words alone can breathe spiritual life and power into them, and make them living words in the soul's experience.

The overcomer is he that escapes the influence of the world, disowns the doctrine of Balaam, refuses democracy in the Church, and Antinomianism, and brings every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

The hidden manna recalls to mind that "golden pot having the manna" laid up in the holiest of all—the beautiful type of a once humbled but now glorified Christ. It is one thing to feed on Him as

the lowly One down here, and another thing to have the soul nourished and strengthened by believing views of Him in His heavenly blessedness and glory. The overcomer has the privilege and benefit of this.

“And will give him a white stone, and in [upon] the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth saving he that receiveth it.”

This is the voting stone of approval and choice—the Lord’s own secret heart’s estimate of His servant, made known to his secret consciousness for the encouragement of His servant’s heart.

THYATIRA.

Verse 18. “And unto the angel [messenger] of the church in THYATIRA write.”

The fourth church in order; the centre church of the seven. As in the seven-branched lampstand of the Tabernacle, there are three branches on each side and one in the centre; so this church occupies the central period from Pentecost to the return of the Lord Jesus, during the middle or dark ages.

In Ephesus we see the Church in apostolic order, that is, as first planted by the apostles, with Jesus in the midst, the centre of the Church of God, upholding and controlling ministry by His own power and authority. In Smyrna, the Church under the persecutions of Pagan Rome. In Pergamos, under the patronage of the state. In Thyatira, the power of the state used in persecuting.

“Thyatira” signifies either perfume bruised, or from *thuo*, to sacrifice, and *teiro*, to wear away—the perfume from persecution.

This church corresponds with the fourth parable in Matt. xiii. 33—the parable of the leaven—and also with the reign of Ahab.

The first three churches succeed one another; the four last divide and subdivide, and these run on to the end. In the first three churches the exhortation to hear precedes the promise to the overcomer; in the last four the promise comes first, thus making a distinction.

The four last churches contain a promise or intimation of the Lord’s return; not so the first three. The last four remain in a divided form to the end; the first three succeed each other undivided.

We now come to the first great division of the Church, which hitherto in outward form was one—the time when the Western Church (the Roman) divided from the Eastern (the Greek Church).

The church in Thyatira, in symbol, is the representative of the Western or Roman Church.

"These things, saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet *are* like fine brass."

"The Son of God." Not, as the Romish Church so persistently represents Him, merely Son of the Virgin, but the Eternal Son in the bosom of the Father; not merely the Infant Child in the arms of His Virgin Mother.

He is not one contented with a fair outward form, but His eyes penetrate and discover the secrets of the heart. And His ways are ways of purity and strength: strong as fine brass, and pure as brass refined in the furnace.

Verse 19. "I know thy works, and charity [*or* love], and service [ministry], and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last *to be* more than the first."

The Church of Rome is characterised by its elaborate system of work, work, work—and works as essential to salvation—so that the Reformation was called for to bring back the long-lost doctrine of justification by faith.

Yet the Lord does not overlook the works of faith, the labour of love, or the patience of hope, manifested by those who are His true disciples amidst the corruptions of the Romish Church.

Verse 20. "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants [bond or bought-servants] to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols."

The church in Thyatira is foreshadowed by the reign of Ahab, and the wife of Ahab, who stirred him up, was Jezebel.

In chapter ii. 14, it is the *prophet* Balaam who teaches these things; but here it is Jezebel, calling herself a *prophetess*, teaching the blood-bought servants of Christ, and seducing them to spiritual fornication and idolatry.

Corresponding with this is the fourth parable in Matt. xiii: "The kingdom of the heavens is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." The leaven of Eastern countries is sour dough—meal that has undergone the first process of fermentation, before it passes to corruption—and the leaven of unsound doctrine is corrupted truth; and what are the errors of the Church of Rome but truth perverted?

That dogma of the Church of Rome, "Hear the Church," which is a perversion of the words of the Lord Jesus from their original import. If the offending brother will not listen to private admonition, nor the admonition of two or three more; and "if he *also* neglect to hear the

Church," he is to be regarded "as a heathen man and a publican" (Matt. xviii. 17). This dogma, "Hear the Church," perverted to mean that the Church is the centre and source of authority of doctrine rather than the Lord Jesus, lies at the foundation of all Papal error, whereas the Church's place is to learn, and to communicate the truth received (Eph. v. 23, 24; 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12).

In the "Sacrifice of the Mass," so-called, the servant of Christ—that is, the true believer—and the mere outward professor are associated together in the same act of united fellowship. And in the homage paid to the "Host," they are united in the same act of idolatrous worship. This mingling together of the spiritual with the carnal is regarded in the New Testament as spiritual fornication.

Verses 21, 22. "And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not. Behold, *I will* cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death."

Judicial blindness and hardness, and a giving over to the power of evil, is the judgment of unrepenting continuance in sin.

What tribulation has the Papal system brought on lands in which it is rooted! Look at Italy, Spain, Portugal, &c.

Spiritual and eternal death follows on the finally impenitent devotees of the system.

Verse 23. "And all the churches shall know that *I am* He which searcheth *the* reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."

The lesson for all the churches is that the Lord looketh not on the outward appearance, but on the heart.

And individual believers in the Romish Church will be dealt with in strict equity, each receiving according to his own works.

Verses 24, 25. "But unto you I say, [and] unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have *already*, hold fast till I come."

"Unto you." These words are not addressed to the children of Jezebel, that is, the offspring of the Papacy, but to those sincere believers in the midst, who are happily ignorant of those depths of Satan which characterise the theology of the Papal system.

There are those in the midst of this Church who, through faith in Jesus, have some sense of sins forgiven—as the old monk, who said to

Luther, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins"—and who, amidst all their errors and ignorance, have saving faith in Christ. He says to them, "Hold fast that which ye have till I come," that which has been taught you by the Spirit of God. The simple truths of the Gospel—"Hold fast."

Verses 26, 27. "And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto *the* end, to him will I give power [authority] over the nations: and he shall rule [rule as a shepherd] them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as $\mathfrak{J}$ received [have received] of My Father."

Those who simply hold fast vital truths and simple faith in the midst of the Church of Rome may be safe; but they are not overcomers, they are overcome. The overcomer rises superior to the whole system. Fenelon held fast; Luther was an overcomer.

There is a distinction between "thy works" (verse 19) and "My works" (verse 26). Works of human imposition characterise the Church of Rome. "Christ's yoke is easy, and His burden is light." "Ye are My disciples," He says, "if ye do whatsoever $\mathfrak{J}$ command you."

"Authority over the nations" is the one great object of Romish ambition. Her great ones have "reigned as kings."

Though those who spiritually overcome, may do so at the sacrifice and loss of earthly dignity and authority, yet when Christ comes, they will reign with Him. Those who obey Him now will share His authority then.

Verse 28. "And I will give him the Morning Star."

Christ will give him Himself. He is the Bright and Morning Star.

Those who choose Him as their only Lord, and share His rejection and suffering here, will have Him as their portion when He comes as the Morning Star to receive His own, before He arises as Sun of righteousness on the world.

And even now, through faith, the day may dawn, and the Day Star arise in their hearts. The Holy Ghost who is Himself the earnest, may so give them the foretaste of the coming joy, that they may experimentally realise the depth of meaning in those words of the apostle, "Christ in you the hope of glory."

Verse 29. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

If we look on Popery, or on the various imitations of it, we may be in danger of "admiration," for there is much to fascinate (Rev. xvii, 6, 7). Our safeguard is in hearing what the Spirit saith concerning it.

CHAPTER III.

SARDIS.

Verse 1. "And unto the angel [messenger] of the church in SARDIS write."

"Sardis" signifies "Things remaining," to which allusion appears made in the second verse; "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain."

This fifth church corresponds with the fifth parable in Matt. xiii. 44—"the treasure hid in the field." The field is the world; and the treasure, those precious souls given to Christ in the eternal counsels of the Father, and purchased by Him—"Who gave Himself a ransom for all." He not only loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, as symbolised by "the pearl," but He purchased the field or world for the sake of the treasure contained in it. On the ground of redemption, He has a claim to all creation. He is "a propitiation, not for our sins only, but also for the whole world."

"These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars."

This fifth era in the Church's history brings us to the time of the Protestant Reformation.

The typical foreshadowing will be found in the reign of JEHU (2 Kings ix., x.).

In the title assumed the Lord Jesus asserts His proper claims, for the fulness of the Spirit resides in Him; He is the sole depository and the sole dispenser of the gifts of the Spirit; no one but He has a right to say, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" and He is Lord of the harvest. Every Spirit-taught and heaven-enlightened messenger belongs to Him: sole proprietor and sole Lord.

"I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."

The Protestant Reformation, though founded on the revival of the truth of justification by faith alone, was in the main an outward reformation—like that of Jehu.

A vast number of professors separated from the Church of Rome on the profession of the truth; but there was no separation between the living and the dead. They remained as treasure hid in the field, without being separated and manifested as such.

Verse 2. "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God."

The grand essential truths, revived by Protestantism, are among the things which remain; but they need to be watchfully guarded, lest they languish.

The work of the Protestant Reformation was a great and glorious work, accomplished so far by the energy of the Holy Ghost; but it stopped short of full perfection. Carried far, but not far enough; trees cut down, but the roots left; outward corruption of doctrine purged, but much of the secret leaven left.

Some men may regard it as perfect; but it is not so in the estimate of Jesus, nor in the sight of God.

Verse 3. "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard; and hold fast, and repent."

Not simply *WHAT* thou hast received and heard, but *HOW*. See 1 Thess. ii. 13: "Not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God."

Acknowledging the supreme and only authority of the sacred word—the Bible and the Bible *ALONE*, was the religion of Protestants. Not the Bible and tradition; not the Bible and the fathers; but the Bible *ALONE*, and the Bible in its integrity, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. All Scripture being given by the inspiration of God, and infallibly inspired.

Hold fast, a word especially in season at the present time when the foundation truths are being assailed; and the Scriptures themselves are treated as though they were only of human authority. "And repent," that is, of all and every departure from this principle.

"If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."

To be overtaken as by a thief, is not the proper portion of the Church. The Son of Man will come as a thief to the world that lies in darkness. "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness," says Paul, "that that day should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thess. v. 4). Nevertheless, if believers refuse to watch, the coming of the Lord will take them by surprise. Every living believer will be changed and caught up when the Bridegroom comes; but the previous comfort, profit, and blessing of the hope will be lost by those who neglect to watch.

Verse 4. "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white [garments]; for they are worthy."

There may be individual piety, and separateness of spirit, in the midst of an outward and worldly state of things. Such will have the special companionship of their Lord.

Verses 5, 6. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment [garments]; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

The overcomer is not contented with walking blamelessly in the midst of evil, but rises superior to the evils condemned and forsakes them.

Human registers may contain the names of many spiritually dead amongst those who are registered; but the names of the overcomers remain in the Lamb's Book of Life, never to be blotted out. And those who witness a good confession for Christ on earth, in practical separation from the evil around, Christ will confess before God and the heavenly hosts.

PHILADELPHIA.

Verse 7. "And to the angel [messenger] of the church in PHILADELPHIA write."

The church in Philadelphia corresponds to the sixth parable in Matt. xiii. 45, 46: "The kingdom of the heavens is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." This is explained in Eph. v. 25: "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it;" again, in 2 Cor. viii. 9: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor."

The church in Philadelphia represents a work of the Spirit of God of deep and spiritual character, foreshadowed by the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah (2 Chron. xxix., xxxi., xxxiv., xxxv.).

Philadelphia signifies brotherly love; and brotherly love is one of the special features of the acting of the Spirit of God as formative of the Philadelphian church.

The characteristic truths of the church in Philadelphia, formative of this condition, are—the person of Christ: His holiness, truth, and Lordship, and His relationship to the Church as Bridegroom; and the Church's relationship to Him as His Body and His Bride.

What the Church is to Christ comes out especially in the parable of the pearl. It is a pearl of great price, for it is precious to Him as the purchase of His blood; pure and perfect as the workmanship of the Holy Spirit. For those who compose His body now, and will be presented to Him as His Bride hereafter, are spiritually and eternally one, having been baptized by one Spirit into one body, and made to drink into one Spirit, and are exhorted to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. What the Church is in the flesh as too often seen in outward manifestation, is symbolised by the corruptible flesh of the oyster, in which naturally the pearl is embedded. But what the Church is spiritually in the estimate of God, and to the heart of Christ, is typified by the exquisite beauty and purity of the pearl; and by-and-by it will be presented by Christ to Himself a holy church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

“These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no one shutteth; and shutteth, and no one openeth.”

The Lord Jesus was holy in His person, holy in His character, holy in His experience and work—and though made sin for us, Himself knowing no sin—and like the sin-offering under the law, though it was called in the abstract “sin,” yet it was also declared to be “holy of holies.”

“He that is true:” the faithful and true Witness; the truth; the centre and substance of the truth of God. The brotherly love of Philadelphia is pre-eminently “love in the truth, and for the truth’s sake,” that truth centering in the person of the Lord Jesus.

“He that hath the key of David:” the rightful heir of David’s royal throne; the root and the offspring of David; He who in due time will ask for and obtain the sovereignty of the whole earth (Psa. ii.).

“He that openeth, and no one shutteth; and shutteth, and no one openeth:” not only King in the future, but Lord in the present; all authority being given to Him in heaven and upon earth; and, while waiting till His enemies be made His footstool, sovereign Lord in His own Church. Philadelphia owns this; and disowns all authority in the Church but His, and that which comes from Him. He alone the opener, and He alone the one who shuts.

Verse 8. “I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no one can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name.”

“I know thy works.” The Lord Jesus not only looks for the right

profession and confession of His name as the Holy, the True, and the Sovereign One, but He looks for corresponding practice, in conformity with His holiness, truth, and Lordship. And that they should not only have a name to love, but that brotherly love should be carried out in deed and in truth.

Then comes that word—"Behold." This word only occurs once besides in these addresses to the churches, as in chap. iii. 20: "Behold, I stand at the door." In the address to the church in Philadelphia it occurs three or four times. It is a word calling for special notice and attention—mark well! The first "Behold" here is a word to the Philadelphian church. It is a word to those who have love in the truth towards the whole brotherhood of faith; to those who hold the unsullied holiness of the Son of Man, His truth, present Lordship, and coming kingdom. To such He says, Take notice—"Behold, I have set before thee an open door;" they may go into all the world, and preach the glad tidings to every creature. It is remarkable, in these days especially, how in all the earth, barriers to the spread of the truth have been broken down. In former times, had the door been opened, false doctrine and human authority might have been proclaimed. Now, the Lord of the whole earth gives a free passport to His servants throughout His whole dominions. To such He says, look not at the apparent obstacles, but behold the open door which I have set before you; the way is open, enter.

The reason—"For thou hast a little strength." Not "thou art strong," but "thou hast strength"—little, it may be, but real—the strength of Jesus made perfect in weakness through the energy of the Holy Ghost. A child's arm is on the lever; but that lever is faith, and the fulcrum the Rock of Ages. The arm of faith lays hold on God, through Christ, and brings in omnipotence.

Archimedes in vain wished for such a fulcrum, by which to move the world; but faith through the testimony of the Spirit—the enemies themselves being witnesses—"turns the world upside down" (Acts xvii. 6).

"And hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name."

Strict adherence to the word of Christ both as to doctrine and precept, and a testimony and practice which fully owns and in nowise contradicts the name of Christ, as the Holy, the True, and the Sovereign One; these are the characteristics of the Philadelphian church, composed of such concerning whom the Lord can testify that they are faithful to His truth and name.

It is a spiritual and internal work widely diffused, and carried on in the energy of the Holy Ghost, which while it honours the Head,

tends at the same time to unite, harmonise, and benefit the members of the body of Christ. It is the antidote to sectarianism, and not a sect.

Verse 9. "Behold, I *will* make [give] *them* [to be] of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie."

The first "Behold" directs attention to the present period, and to the open door.

The second "Behold" refers to a subsequent time—the time of strong delusion, after the Lord's coming for His Church, in the interval between His coming for her and His appearing in glory with her.

It foretells the result of that which is now going on in Christendom, under the guise of formalism and sacerdotalism. Those who now falsely take Jewish standing by returning to the weak and beggarly elements of an outward ritual, and calling themselves God's people without regeneration of the Spirit, will be given over to form the apostate Church, Babylon the Great, the habitation of devils (chap. xviii. 2).

"Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that *I* have loved thee."

This third "Behold" refers to a further subsequent period, when, on the Lord's manifestation, He comes to be admired in His saints, who will appear with Him in glory, and when the love wherewith He loves His own will be publicly apparent (John xvii. 22).

Verse 10. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience [or endurance], *I* also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall [is about to] come upon all the [habitable] world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

The church in Philadelphia has fellowship with Christ in His patient expectation—first of receiving His Bride, and then His kingdom; and this on the authority of His word—"the word of My patience."

And the church in Philadelphia has the assurance, from the Lord's own lips, of exemption from the very hour of the coming great temptation, when the signs of the man of sin—the lawless one—will be sufficient to deceive, if possible, the very elect; the promise of being kept, not merely from the craft and power, but from the hour—the time itself.

Verse 11. "Behold, I come quickly."

This is the fourth "Behold."

This marks the era of the Philadelphian church: He is coming quickly; the end draws near. It is not simply the cry made "Behold the Bridegroom cometh," arousing the Church from her slumbers, to

trim the lamps and go forth to meet Him, but the announcement of the Bridegroom Himself, that He is already at the door, with His hand on the knocker (Luke xii. 36).

“Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man [no one] take thy crown” [thy *stephanos*, or victor’s crown].

The little strength, the word, the name, the patient expectation, and the promise of exemption from the coming hour of temptation—“Hold fast.” These surrendered, the victor’s crown is forfeited. Never was there a period in which this exhortation was more needed than at the present, when not only the special hopes of the Church, but the very foundations of divine truth are assailed (2 Pet. iii. 1-4).

Verse 12. “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God ; and he shall go no more out.”

The overcomer in Philadelphia stands firm, and holds fast. For the characteristics being internal, real, and spiritual, the Lord finds fault with nothing.

Instead of being given over to form part of the synagogue of Satan, the overcomer is made a pillar in the temple of God : not simply a stone—all believers are living stones built up a spiritual house—but a pillar, like Peter, James, and John, conspicuous and sustaining. And his steadfastness on earth will be recompensed by a permanent abiding in the glory.

“And I will write upon him the name of My God.”

“My God :” he shall have the stamp of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ upon him.

The writing—the handwriting of Christ Himself, clear, legible, and apparent.

“And the name of the city of My God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God.”

Christ will cause the overcomer in Philadelphia to be distinctly recognised in time and in eternity as belonging to the Bride, the Lamb’s wife, which is set forth in emblem as the Holy City, the New Jerusalem ; divine and heavenly in its origin, and associated with Him in His kingdom and glory.

“And *I will write upon him* My new name.”

To the overcomer in the church in Pergamos, Christ promises to give a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written (chap. iii. 12). He Himself when He is manifested in glory, appears as having a name written “which no man knew but He Himself” (chap. xix. 12). In this honour Christ associates the overcomer with Himself.

Verse 13. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Oh for the opened and anointed ear, that the faintest whisper might be distinctly heard, received, held fast, and acted on !

LAODICEA.

Verse 14. "And unto the angel [messenger] of the church of the LAODICEANS [*or in Laodicea*] write."

Laodicea probably means "righteous people."

This seventh and last church corresponds with the seventh parable in Matt. xiii.—the parable of the net.

There are two things which characterise the last stage of the Church's history—outwardly, increased activity in Gospel work ; inwardly, self-righteousness, spiritual pride, and lukewarmness as to the truth and authority of Christ.

The historical types are Manasseh and Zedekiah (2 Chron. xxxiii, xxxvi.).

"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning [*or head*] of the creation of God." (See Col. i. 15-18.)

The Church having dispensationally failed in its testimony for God, this testimony is taken up and secured by Christ, "the faithful and true Witness," and the upholder of all things.

Verse 15. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot : I would thou wert cold or hot."

The Church is placed on the earth with a solemn charge, with precious truth ; and in the midst of perishing souls, lukewarmness, half-heartedness, will not do, especially as the latter end draws nigh. The world is intensely in earnest. Satan and all the powers of darkness, knowing that their time is short, are acting in concert.

God is in earnest, Christ is in earnest, the Holy Ghost is in earnest. The day for decision is come ; and anything bearing the appearance of half-heartedness or lukewarmness is intolerable to the mind of the Lord Jesus.

He complains of a want of earnestness, want of life. "You are in a medium condition—not altogether indifferent to the truth of My name, yet there is no corresponding zeal. You have the banner of the truth, but it is not kept floating in the breeze. You are not altogether like the worldly ones, nor are you altogether decided for Me. You do not go to places of fashionable amusement, neither do

you frequent the prayer meeting. You do not, with the sceptic, altogether deny the inspired word, neither do you maintain it in all its integrity. The cross is not altogether set aside, but the Divine glory of the work and the infinite value of the atoning sacrifice is not insisted upon. The evil of sin is not altogether denied, but the enormity of its guilt and the solemnity of its eternal doom are kept out of sight. You are not entirely ignorant of Scriptural truth, but you need life and reality put into the truth you have."

Verse 16. "So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will [am about to] spue thee out of My mouth."

This does not touch for a moment the security of individual believers in Christ, but it foretells the rejection and setting aside of the Church's dispensational testimony on earth. As the Jewish testimony was set aside, in order to bring in the witness of the Church, and the natural branches broken off that the wild olive branches might be grafted in, and the Gentiles put in the place of testimony for God, in like manner, if the Gentile Christian testimony becomes a failure through want of earnestness, this also will be set aside, and Israel again become God's witnesses in the earth. (See Rom. xi. 13-25.)

Verse 17. "Because thou sayest, 'I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;' and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable [*or* pitiable], and poor, and blind, and naked:

Verse 18. "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear: and anoint thine eyes *with* eye-salve, that thou mayest see."

Laodicea has Philadelphian truth, without Philadelphian faithfulness and power. The principles of truth which are formative of Philadelphia are held doctrinally, and, instead of practically influencing the character and life, become the dogmas of a sect.

The completeness of the Church in Christ is seen, without a corresponding sense of personal emptiness, weakness, and nothingness. "Never look within," is the watchword. The blessedness of the eighth of Romans is gloried in, but the application of the seventh of Romans to the believer is denied.

In Laodicea experimental truth is at a discount. Hence the counsel of the Lord is to bring in His Divine all-sufficiency into the emptiness of the creature; to put on Christ practically, in spirit,

character, and walk, so that what is natural may not be seen; and, instead of glorying in Pentecost as a thing merely of the past, to seek and to obtain from Christ the anointing with "fresh oil"—the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ for daily need, and the "Spirit of wisdom and revelation" for fresh discoveries of Divine truth.

Verse 19. "As many as $\mathfrak{J}$ love [fondly love], I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent."

The rebukes and chastenings of the Lord are proofs of His unchanging love. They are designed to lead to repentance, and to increasing zeal, earnestness, and devotedness.

Verse 20. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any *man* hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and $\mathfrak{h}$ c with Me."

This is the first and only "Behold" in the address. A solemn and important fact is called attention to—"Behold, I stand at the door." Awake to the fact that Christ Himself is outside the Laodicean system.

Instead of the open door of Philadelphia, there is a closed door, and so effectually closed that Christ Himself in His members is shut out.

The three epsistles of John are strikingly characteristic of the last times of the Church. In the first epistle the doctrine of Christ is clearly stated. In the second epistle the truth of Christ is guarded—the door is shut against those who bring not this true doctrine (verses 10, 11). This is Philadelphian faithfulness. In the third epistle the faithful holders of the truth are shut out; and not only so, but also those who would receive them (verse 10). The full truth comes out in this address to the Church in Laodicea: Christ Himself is virtually excluded.

Under the profession of zeal for truth and church "ground," there may be real lukewarmness as to the person of Christ. But while Christ is outside He is knocking (see Sol. Song, v. 2); and when His voice is heard, and the door opened, He will admit the individual into the closest communion with Himself. It is not here so much Christ knocking at the door of the impenitent sinner's heart, though that may be true in its place; but it is the expression of the Lord's desire to be admitted into more intimate communion with those He loves.

And this intimate communion with Christ according to the prayer in Eph. iii. 16–19, "strengthened with might by God's Spirit in the inner man," Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, and all saints admitted into this holy fellowship of brotherly love, this the true antidote to Laodicean lukewarmness.

Verse 21. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, *even as* *I* also overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne."

The overcomer, rising superior to the lukewarmness of the age, and to the widespread indifference to vital truth, contends earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. He repents at the voice of Christ, and substitutes zeal for his Lord for party spirit. In the consciousness of his own emptiness he opens his heart and soul to the fulness of Christ; then opens the door to Christ Himself, and to those who are faithful to Him. Fellowship with Christ in His kingdom and glory when He sits on His own throne is the privilege of every true believer; "for it is a faithful saying, if we suffer we shall also reign with Him."

But to the overcomer Christ gives the promise, and by the witness of the Holy Ghost within He gives the earnest and the foretaste, thus enabling him to realise beforehand the joy of the coming kingdom.

Verse 22. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

This still small voice of the Spirit is only heard in the silence of the soul, in the solemn presence of God, the world shut out, and the busy din of the professing Church equally excluded.

CHAPTER IV.

Verse 1. "After this [these things] I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven" [having been and being opened. *Perfect participle*]. (See Ezek. i. 1.)

We now come to the third division of the Book of Revelation.

See chapter i. 19. First division: "Write the things which thou hast seen." The opening vision of the first chapter—one like unto the Son of Man, in the midst of the seven golden lampstands.

Second division: "And the things which are." The present state of things in the churches—"the mystery of the seven golden lampstands," as seen by John in spirit in resurrection rest, looking back on the Church's earthly history.

Third division: "And the things which are about to be after these things." After the Church's earthly history is completed.

"After these things I looked."

After John had been shown, in vision and in symbol, the failure of the Church's testimony on earth, he looks out for what is to follow, and

seeing nothing around him, he looks up. "And, behold." That word "behold" calls special attention to what follows. "Behold, a door opened in heaven." Not then opened, but "having been and being opened" (perfect participle).

When everything has failed on earth, then is the time to look up. So, in John xiv., Christ having foretold, in the thirteenth chapter, the failure of all His disciples, and even Peter's denial of Him, goes on to direct His disciples upwards to His Father's house, its many mansions, and the special place He is gone to prepare.

"Heaven opened," not closed; no cherubim with flaming sword guarding its entrance.

This is the third door to which our attention is drawn in these chapters. First, the open door of testimony for those who have kept the word, and have not denied the name of the holy, true, and sovereign Lord (chap. iii. 8). Then the closed door of party bigotry, with Christ outside (chap. iii. 20). Here, "a door opened in heaven." Not then opened. When Jesus expired on Calvary's cross, and the veil of the temple was rent in twain, then the way into the holiest was made manifest; and to faith it is open still.

"And the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said [saying], 'Come up hither.'"

A trumpet note, giving no uncertain sound to the instructed ear; not plain ordinary language, but rich symbolic teaching. And John xxi. 21-23 may give us the signification of it. Jesus, in answer to the inquiry of Peter, says of this self-same John who wrote the Book of Revelation, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" By this the other brethren understood that that disciple should not die. But Jesus said not, "He shall not die," but, "If I will that he tarry till I come." These are no random words. There was deep significancy in them. And I believe this vision in the fourth of Revelation is the interpretation of them; just as the vision of the transfiguration, as interpreted by Peter in his epistle, was the fulfilment of the promise of some standing there not tasting death until they had seen the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.

It has been often asked, "Where do we see the Church caught up in the Book of Revelation?" I answer, "Here." Not stated in plain language—that would have been out of character with the structure of the book, which is symbolic—but representatively in the person of John, and in fulfilment of the symbolic language of the Lord Jesus to him.

Here, too, I discover in symbol "the voice of the archangel and the trump of God," of 1 Thess. iv.

“And I will show thee things which must be hereafter [after these things].”

Compare chap. i. 19: “The things which are about to be after these things.” Things which cannot take place during the present dispensation, while the Comforter is here, but which must come to pass when the present Church history is completed.

Verse 2. “And immediately I was [*or became*] in *the Spirit*: and, behold, a throne was set [*imperfect tense*] in heaven, and *one* sat [*sitting*] on the throne.”

John hears the trumpet call, and immediately in spirit he is caught up. Even so, “Behold,” says the apostle, “I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump” (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52). “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. iv. 17).

So likewise in spirit we must hear the voice of the heavenly Bridegroom saying, “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away” (Sol. Song ii. 10), if we would see the things which are coming.

We must not seek to interpret these coming things by transactions during the present dispensation, as many do. We must not treat as untrue or irrelevant the word of the Lord Jesus before His ascension: “It is not for you to know *the times or the seasons*, which the Father hath put in His own power” (Acts i. 7).

But as having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, in spirit obey the call, “Come up hither,” and, taking in spirit our place with Christ in the heavenlies, look back on the Church’s earthly history, as symbolised by the seven golden lampstands, interpreted by the Lord’s seven addresses, and then look forward to the things which must be after these things, as shown in vision in the succeeding chapters.

“And, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sitting on the throne.”

This is the second “Behold” in the chapter. A throne established in the heavens. One characteristic of heaven is the throne. “Heaven,” says God, “is My throne, and the earth is My footstool.” Heaven is the centre of authority, and the centre of power to the universe.

There is but one will in heaven. Angels never consult their own will, or plan their own pathway. “They do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word.” One will regulates all without jar or discord.

I suspect the first discord caused in heaven was by Satan’s having

a will of his own, a counter will. And this discord he introduced into this world by tempting our first parents to have and to exercise a will of their own, instead of carrying out the will of Him who said, "Thou shalt not."

It is the independent will of man which fills the world with discord, and peoples the bottomless pit with millions of miserable souls.

God has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. "He willeth not the death of the sinner." "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." How comes it, then, that the broad road is thronged from age to age? Because man has a will of his own. He is not willing to come to Christ that he might have life.

What is conversion? What is salvation? What is eternal life? Letting God have His own will with us. That is it.

Why are all in heaven so eternally secure, happy, and blessed? Because there is a throne set in heaven, and One sitting upon it.

No wonder the Lord Jesus put that marvellous prayer into the mouth of His disciples: "Thy will be done also on the earth, as it is in heaven." When this prayer is answered it will be "heaven begun below."

The starry heavens move on in unbroken harmony. "Not one faileth." This world, it would seem, is the only province in the universe in which God's will is not fulfilled—the only part of the vast machinery which is out of gear. Man has a will of his own.

"And one sitting on the throne." There is not only sovereignty, but a Sovereign. Not only one will, but One whose will is law; and that law the law of love. So that each can say, "Oh, how love I Thy law! Yea, Thy law is within my heart."

Those who go in for democracy, chartism, equal rights, what they call liberty, are really going in for the most terrible tyranny—the tyranny of an independent, unsubject will. These are not the politics of heaven, but of hell. Satan is the god of this world, but I know not that he will be a prince in hell. I do not know that they will allow him to domineer over them there. They may stand up for equal rights. One ingredient of hell's torment will probably be every one having a will of their own; but if there should be a despot there, his dominion will not be of love, but of fear.

Verse 3. "And He that sat [sitteth, or the sitter. Present participle with the article] was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone."

Precious stones in Scripture are emblematic of various excellences of character, various perfections.

The jasper is a precious stone of various colours—cerulean, purple, green, &c.—intermingled.

It suggests to us the various excellences, attributes, and perfections of Him that sitteth on the throne, blended together and harmonised—the glory and adaptation of Him that sitteth there.

The sardine stone is the colour of blood. God is not only a Being of Divine perfections harmoniously blended—a God of grace, love, wisdom, and power—but He is a God that taketh vengeance, of strict inflexible justice, a consuming fire; and the blood-red sardine stone may remind us of this. And the time of the vision is the season of the seals, trumpets, and vials.

“And *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.”

In wrath God remembers mercy. The rainbow is the divinely constituted sign of covenant mercy founded on accepted sacrifice (Gen. viii.).

In the rainbow the three primitive colours are blended and harmonised, beginning with the blue and ending with the red, with the yellow in the centre, and in their beauteous combinations completing the perfect seven. So in God’s covenant-keeping goodness every Divine perfection is harmonised and displayed.

“A rainbow round about the throne.” The circle which now appears broken, as seen from an earthly standpoint, completed. What God does we know not now, but we shall know hereafter. The whole circle then will appear complete, the mysteries of His providence will be solved, everlasting love having worked out in time on earth the purposes which will result in everlasting glory in heaven.

“In sight like unto an emerald.” The prevailing tint is green—the characteristic of the earth. So these purposes of God have especial reference to this world. The cross was set up on earth; on earth the blood of God’s spotless Lamb was shed, and in the cross God’s plans and purposes centre, and the blood of the everlasting covenant confirms them.

On this earth, in Eden, the will of God was set aside. In Gethsemane the Son of Man surrendered His own will, and accepted the will of God, saying “Father, not My will, but Thine, be done.”

In the millennial period the kingdom of God will be established on earth. And when the new heavens and the new earth shall appear, the will of God will be done on earth even as it is done in heaven; and because of the scenes once transacted upon it, this earth will be an object of peculiar interest to the universe throughout eternity.

Verse 4. "And round about the throne *were* four and twenty seats [thrones]: and upon the seats [thrones] I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment [garments]; and they had on their heads [victors'] crowns of gold."

This is a vision of the "kingdom of God," for God is supreme; it is also the "kingdom of the heavens," for others are associated with Him in the administration of the kingdom.

In Dan. iv. 26, we have the expression "The heavens do rule;" and in Dan. vii. 18, "The saints of the Most High [*or of the heavenlies*] shall take the kingdom." This is the "kingdom of the heavens," as so called in the Gospel by Matthew alone. The term "kingdom of God" shows God to be supreme.

The conviction I have come to, after many years' consideration and investigation of the subject, is, that these four and twenty elders are the symbolic representatives of the saints of the former dispensation, from Adam and Abel to Pentecost, similar to the elders of the eleventh of Hebrews, who by faith obtained a good report, and, that they might obtain a better resurrection, were faithful unto death, and gained the victor's crown; who also, in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, are described as the "spirits of just men made perfect," in distinction from the "church of the firstborn."

Their robes are white through the blood of the Lamb, and on their brows are seen the victor's wreath, for they have fought the fight, and have finished their course, and have now sat down.

Verse 5. "And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices."

The aspect of the throne during this intervening period between the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him, and His manifestation to the world—the last week of Daniel's seventy weeks of years—takes the Sinai character. This is the time when "God's judgments are on the earth"—the time of the seals, trumpets, and vials.

"And seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God."

In place of the seven golden lampstands around the Son of Man, we have now seven lamps of fire burning before the throne. The Spirit of God is no longer seen as maintaining spiritual testimony in the churches on earth to the truth of God and of Christ. He is here seen in all His Divine perfection and sovereignty, and in His transcendent holiness and vehement jealousy for truth. The Comforter has completed His mission. The bride has been wooed and won. The Divine Eliezer ["God my helper"] has conducted the spiritual

Rebekah across the desert, and presented her to the heavenly Isaac, the beloved Son who has been obedient unto death and was raised again, and who has come forth to meet her.

Verse 6. "And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass like unto crystal."

In the tabernacle and the temple we have the patterns of things in the heavens; in these apocalyptic visions we have the heavenly things themselves. This sea of glass corresponds with the laver of the tabernacle, and the brazen sea of Solomon's temple. But it is no longer the provision of water for the putting away of the defilement of the wilderness or of the land, but that which represents the *fixed purity* of heaven, the holiness which becomes the presence of God. Holiness has its settled home there.

In the temple of Ezekiel there is neither laver or brazen sea mentioned, but living water issuing from under the threshold which flows round on the south side of the altar, the place occupied by the brazen sea in Solomon's temple; flowing forth on the east, widening and deepening in its flow, diffusing life and fertility in its course. An emblem of life in the Spirit which needs no purification, for the Spirit of God is holy, and the life which He communicates is divinely pure.

In Rev. xxii. 1 this living water is seen proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

"And in *the* midst of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beasts [living ones], full of eyes before and behind."

There are three positions in connection with the throne of God pointed out in Revelation. First, "BEFORE THE THRONE" (chap. vii.). "After these things I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb." A position of peculiar honour, a dignity which Gabriel delights to mention as the highest honour to which an angel could aspire: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God" (Luke i. 19).

Second, "ROUND ABOUT THE THRONE" (verse 4). Not simply "before"—it comprehends that—but "round about," giving the idea of closer association, more intimate connection. Not simply standing to serve, but sitting on thrones, and sharing in the reign. The position of the raised saints of the former dispensation.

But here, in the sixth verse, we have a position of still greater privilege—"IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE, and round about the throne." Not only sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in

the kingdom of God, and sharing it with the saints of the heavenlies ; not only privilege, honour, blessedness, but UNION with Him who is there.

Union with whom? See chap. v. 6: "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living ones, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain."

These living ones not only stand before the throne and serve, as redeemed unto God by the blood of the Lamb—not only sit on thrones as the elders—they are one with the Lamb in the midst of the throne, "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones," raised up together and made to sit together in Him and with Him in the heavens. For when God "raised Him from the dead, and set Him on His own right hand in the heavenlies," He "gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

The elders who obtained a good report through faith looked for a city which hath foundations, and a heavenly inheritance, and they have now in the time of the vision been put in full possession ; but the perfection of the kingdom was not reached when the four and twenty elders were seated on their thrones, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. And this better thing is the Church of the living God in its oneness with the Lamb in the midst of the throne.

"Four living ones," as instinct with Divine, spiritual, and eternal life. "Full of eyes before and behind," that is, full of intelligence of things coming and past.

These living ones remind us of the cherubim described in Ezek. i. The leading thought, I believe, connected with the cherubim is the agency which God employs for the communication of His mind, the performance of His will, and the manifestation of His glory—first, ANGELIC, as at the east of the Garden of Eden (Gen. iii. 24) ; then purely SPIRITUAL and DIVINE, as on the propitiatory of the ark (Ex. xxv. 18) ; then the whole company of the REDEEMED in glory, as shown by the larger cherubim in Solomon's temple, of olive wood, covered with gold, typical of the spiritual and raised bodies of the saints in glory ; then PROPHEPIC agency, as seen in Ezek. i., &c. ; but here, in the four living ones of the Apocalypse, the CHURCH of the firstborn written in heaven, the members of the body of Christ in resurrection glory in association with the Lamb.

Verse 7. "And the first beast [living one] *was* like a lion."
The emblem of strength, majesty, courage, and magnanimity.

"And the second beast [living one] like a calf."
The emblem of patient continuance in service and subjection.

In Ezekiel it is the ox, here the calf, suggesting the thought of eternal youth for an eternity of service.

"And the third beast [living one] had [having] a [the] face as a man." The emblem of intelligence and sympathy.

"And the fourth beast [living one] *was* like a flying eagle."

The eagle is noted for its piercing vision and powerful wing—the prophetic character.

Verse 8. "And the four beasts [living ones] had each of them six wings about *him*."

The uses of these are explained in Isa. vi., speaking of the seraphim, or burning ones: "With twain he covered his face"—the token of reverence; "with twain he covered his feet"—the token of humility; "and with twain he did fly"—activity in service.

"And *they were* full of eyes within."

Not only having a knowledge of the past and future, as in verse 6, but also internal spiritual intelligence, knowing as they are known.

"And they rest not day and night saying, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord [Jehovah] God Almighty, which was [ever was], and is [ever is], and is to come [which ever is to come].'"

Untiring, unceasing service, worship, praise, to the everlasting, holy, and almighty triune God.

Verses 9, 10. "And when *those* beasts [living ones] give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat [sitteth] on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat [sitteth] on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever."

Next to the Lamb in the midst of the assembly, with whom the song originates (Ps. xxii. 22), are the leaders of the chorus of the skies, the church of the firstborn; then the four and twenty elders, representing the redeemed from Abel to Pentecost; and then the "great congregation" (Ps. xxii. 25)—that is, the heavenly hosts, take up the strain in ever widening circles, till the unlimited universe is filled with Jehovah's praise.

"And cast their crowns [victors' crowns] before the throne, saying,

Verse 11. "Thou art worthy, O Lord [Jehovah] to receive glory and honour and power: for *Thou* hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure [*or* because of Thy will] they are and were created."

A beautiful and expressive action, signifying "Not unto us, not

unto us, but unto Thy name be the glory." A noble ascription of praise. As with God originated creation at the first, so with Him also originated the purpose to head up all things in Christ, whereby the stability and blessedness of creation is secured for all eternity.

CHAPTER V.

Verse 1. "And I saw in [*or on*] the right hand of Him that sat [*sitteth*] on the throne a book [*or roll of a book*, βιβλίον] written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals."

For similarity of expression we will refer to Ezek. ii. 9, 10: "And when I looked, behold, a hand *was* sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book *was* therein; and he spread it before me; and *it was* written within and without: and *there was* written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe."

The eternal God, the Majesty of heaven, is He that sitteth upon the throne, and especially God the Father.

"A roll of a book." The ancient books were made of skins or parchments, sewn together and rolled up; in reading, unrolled with one hand and rolled up with the other.

To understand the sealing with seven seals, we will suppose seven skins of parchment, written on both sides, and joined together, one skin rolled up and sealed, and then another, until all seven were sealed.

There are purposes in the mind of God and in the hand of the Almighty, but there are obstacles to their accomplishment; there are seven seals. Though that mind is the mind of infinite Wisdom, and that hand is the hand of Omnipotence, there is a sevenfold hindrance to their accomplishment (and seven is the number of perfection).

"For justice hath withstood
The purposes of love."

Though the roll of the book was written on both sides—everything matured, all planned and perfected, nothing left to contingency, all provided for in the mind of Him who is omniscient—still there are hindrances: hindrances on the part of man—unbelief and sin opposing a barrier to the influx of goodness, love, and grace; infinite justice, holiness, and truth to be met and satisfied. And when one obstacle is overcome, then another, and yet another, until the perfect number is accomplished.

Verses 2, 3. "And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?' And no man [no one] in the heaven, nor in [on the] earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon."

"Who? who? who?" goes forth from the voice of the mighty angel. "Who? who? who?" comes back in echo from the universe around. No one—not simply man, but no one in heaven or earth—is found worthy or able to open the book, or to loose the seals.

Verse 4. "And I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon."

What a disappointment to the heart of John! No one is found worthy either to open, to read, or even to look on the book; not even the archangel Michael is worthy, whose name signifies "Who like God?" or Gabriel is able, whose name means "The Power of God;" for if it is a question of worthiness, none is worthy; and if it is a question of power, none is able.

Verse 5. "And one of the elders saith unto me, 'Weep not: behold, the Lion [which is] of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, *hath* prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.'"

In this dilemma—John weeping, the universe silent, no response to the cry—one of the elders, that is, one of the spirits of just men made perfect, around the throne, one in the secret council of God, bids him dry his tears.

"Behold!" Another of those wondrous "Beholds" which gem the pages of the sacred word. "Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah"—of Judah, the royal tribe, whose emblem was the lion—the Shiloh that was to come. "The Root of David"—David's Lord, as well as David's Son.

"Prevailed," not simply "hath prevailed." The statement of a fact accomplished at a definite period. When did He prevail? What gave Him the title to take the book and open it? The answer is given in verse 9: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and didst redeem us to God by Thy blood."

It was at the cross of Calvary that the Lion of the tribe of Judah prevailed. Redemption through His blood as the Lamb of God gave Him title to open the book.

This removes every barrier to the accomplishment of the Divine purposes of grace and love towards Israel, and towards the earth, and man.

Verse 6. "And I beheld, and, lo, in *the* midst of the throne and of the four beasts [living ones], and in *the* midst of the elders, stood a [young] Lamb [*ἀγνόν*] as it had been slain."

"Lo!" "Behold!" Another wonder before unnoticed. "A Lamb as it had been slain." Notice how the symbols change, for this is a book of symbols.

The angel says, "Behold, the Lion;" John looked, and beheld a Lamb. They are both symbols of the same person—the Lion in His majestic, mighty power; the Lamb in His gentleness of atoning sacrifice. Mighty, but mighty to save; majesty, meekness, and salvation combined.

"Jesus in the midst." How the Spirit of God always put Him in the centre place! In the bosom of the Father, as the centre of Divine affection, His eternal dwelling-place; on the cross, a malefactor on either hand, and "Jesus in the midst;" in the Church, where two or three are gathered together unto His name, there He is in the midst of them; here, in the midst of the throne, in the centre of majesty, glory, dominion, and praise, and in the midst of the living ones and elders, the centre of the redeemed in heavenly glory.

"A young Lamb," in all the vigour of immortal youth.

"As having been slain." The memorials of Calvary will never be effaced; those pierced hands and feet and riven side will witness throughout eternity to redemption's completed work—everlasting monuments of redeeming grace and love. In incarnation and redemption God put His stamp upon humanity, but in resurrection, in the Person of the risen Christ, who is the image of God, the results of incarnation and redemption leave their impress upon Deity for all eternity. Every work of Almighty power throughout eternity will bear the impress of those pierced hands, every footstep of onward progress will leave the imprint of those nail-pierced feet, and that opened side will afford to an admiring and adoring universe an insight into the heart of Divine and infinite love such as was never seen before, and to be seen in such perfection nowhere else.

"Stood" [having stood and standing, *perfect participle*]. These figures of sitting and standing are emblematical. As to redemption's completed work, He has for ever sat down; but when occasion calls for it He stands, as when dying Stephen saw Him.

We have here "God manifest in flesh," the brightness of Divine glory shining in the person of Immanuel: the ACTINGS of God, the WAYS of God, the HEART of God, revealed in redemption, and in the person of the Redeemer, as nowhere else. We may see much of the handiwork of God in creation, many of His wondrous ways in providence, much of His lovingkindness and bounty when He opens His hand and satis-

fies the desire of every living thing ; but in Calvary's cross under an eclipse, and on the throne of God in unveiled glory, every perfection of Godhead shines forth.

Those hands of Immanuel were ever active in His lifetime, those feet ever going about doing good, that heart beating in untiring love. But when those hands and feet were transfixed to Calvary's cross, the love of that heart was seen as never seen before. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end."

The Father's eye in infinite love rested on those actings and walkings of obedient love on earth while He was living and serving here. Again and again comes forth the approving voice : "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." But never was the Father's heart so stirred in its boundless depths, as when the beloved Son, obedient unto death, expired on Calvary's cross. To this Jesus Himself witnessed : "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life."

God has provided that these memorials of redeeming love should be seen by every eye throughout eternity.

"Having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."

Jesus is here seen as the ascended Man in full possession of the plenitude of the Spirit in the perfection of His power and wisdom.

The Holy Ghost is not represented here as the Comforter, His commission as such having been accomplished when the Church is completed. He is no longer seen as taking out of the Gentiles a people for the name of God, and forming a bride for His Son ; but as sent forth into all the earth, to prepare a multitude which no man can number out of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue, for the scenes of the great tribulation, who being faithful unto death, and having washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, will stand before God and share in the first resurrection. For "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of Jehovah shall lift up a standard against him" (Isa. lix. 19).

Verse 7. "And He came, and took [hath taken] the book out of the right hand of Him that sat [sitteth] upon the throne."

The Lamb is seen in the vision as coming and taking the book. But His accomplished work in redemption has given Him the title to open it ; and to take the fulfilment of the Divine purposes into His own hands.

Verse 8. "And when He had taken the book, the four beasts [living ones] and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one [*or each*] of them harps, and

golden vials [*or* bowls] full of odours, which are the prayers of [the] saints."

The redeemed of the past and present dispensations, as seen in vision, fall down as worshippers. The harps express their capacity for praise according to the claims of redeeming love; and the golden vials (*or* bowls) symbolise their priestly office. And these vials are full of odours, which are interpreted to be the prayers of the saints. What saints? Not those of the present dispensation, but the saints on earth during the last week of Daniel's seventy weeks of years; for that is the period contemplated in the vision. These saints will be pre-eminently a praying people. The Book of Psalms, with its five divisions, is especially prepared and compiled for their use;—in spirit adapted to saints in all ages, but as to circumstances, events, and characters, peculiarly designed and adapted to those exposed to the wiles and persecution of the Lawless One in the latter times. It is only when read in this light that the Psalms can be thoroughly understood.

The memorial of their prayers on earth will be presented by this raised and heavenly priesthood above. To this the Psalmist alludes in Ps. cxli. 2: "Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening oblation."

Verse 9. "And they sung [*sing*] a new song, saying, 'Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed [*didst redeem*] us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation.'"

Though the word "us" is omitted by some MSS., the weight of evidence is in its favour. The four living ones and the four and twenty elders are the representatives of those who by the blood of the Lamb have been redeemed unto God, not from Israel only, but from all nations of the earth; and they praise God for it, and extol the Lamb.

Verse 10. "And hast made [*didst make*] us [*or them*] unto our God, kings and priests, and we [*or they*] shall reign on the earth."

There is a difference in the reading of Greek MSS. in this verse.

The Textus Receptus reads "didst make us," and "we shall reign." And this is true of all the redeemed. See chap. i. 6, "Made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." Some MSS. read, "And didst make them," and "they shall reign." And this is true also of the saints who will be called to pass through the scenes of the last prophetic week of years, and the times of Antichrist. They too shall be kings and priests and share in the millennial kingdom.

Verses 11, 12. "And I beheld, and I heard *the* voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts [living ones] and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands [*or* myriads of myriads]; saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.'"

The "innumerable company of angels" in "general assembly" (Heb. xii. 22, 23) then unite with the redeemed in giving honour and glory to the Lamb.

They acquiesce in the Divine arrangement that the One who was once made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death should be exalted far above all "principality, and power, and might, and dominion," and "be crowned with glory and honour."

Verse 13. "And every creature which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under [underneath] the earth, and such as are in [on] the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, 'Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.'"

The blessings of redemption are not confined to this present world: the whole creation shares them; not, indeed, in the way of deliverance out of the effects of sin and transgression, but in the way of preservation from them. All things are reconciled through that blood, "whether they be things on the earth, or things in the heavens" (Col. i. 20).

When the world's history is completed, after the final outbreak of evil, at the close of the Millennium, all evil will be banished to the lake of eternal fire; there shall be no more suffering, no more death, neither sorrow nor sin, in the eternity to come; for God has purposed that in the dispensation of the fulness of times all things shall be headed up in Christ the second Adam, in Whom from henceforth the unfailling blessedness of the whole universe will be secured. Hence the entire universe joins this ascription of praise unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

Verse 14. "And the four beasts [living ones] said, 'Amen.' And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever."

The redeemed take up the song and complete it, and worship closes the scene.

CHAPTER VI.

Verse 1. "And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard as it were *the* noise of thunder, one of the four living ones saying, 'Come and see.'"

We have in this chapter the opening of the seals, thus making known to us the purposes of God; the time for the accomplishment of those purposes is yet future, awaiting the removal of the Church, and the completion of the present dispensation.

Verse 2. "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had [having] a bow; and a crown [a victor's crown] was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."

The white horse is the emblem of military imperial power. And there is one to exercise it, a sinner on the horse; having a bow, not a sword, the instrument of indiscriminate slaughter, but a bow to single out and to destroy individuals who may resist his will.

Though he comes forward with authority to put any one to death, he wears no crown, but one is given to him; not a diadem, the regal crown, but a *stephanos* or victor's crown. It is not a diadem inherited, but a victor's crown given. So Napoleon I. and Napoleon III., after grasping the military power of the nation, each were voted Emperor of the French.

Thus in the possession of imperial power, the people's king, he goes forth conquering and to conquer, extending his empire on every hand.

The interpretation of these six seals we have given us in a most clear and convincing manner in Matt. xxiv. 4: "And Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Take heed that no one deceive you, for many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ: and shall deceive many.'" See also 1 John ii. 18: "Ye heard that the Antichrist shall come; even now are there many Antichrists."

This coming of Antichrist to usurp, and to have given to him the empire of the world, is set before us in the first-opened seal.

Verses 3, 4. "And when He *had* opened the second seal, I heard the second beast [living one] say [saying], 'Come and see.' And there went out another horse *that was* red: and *power* was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword."

Compare Zechariah vi. 1-3: "And I turned, and lifted up mine

eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains *were* mountains of brass. In the first chariot *were* red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; and in the third chariot white horses, and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses."

This is explained in Ezek. xiv. 21: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, How much more when I send My four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, sword, and famine, and noisome beast, and pestilence?"

The red horse is the emblem of bloodshed and carnage; as Matt. xxiv. 6, 7: "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars. . . . For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."

Verses 5, 6. "And when He *had* opened the third seal, I heard the third beast [living one] saying, 'Come and see.' And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him having a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts [living ones] saying, 'A measure of wheat for a penny [denarius], and three measures of barley for a penny [denarius]; and *see* thou hurt not the oil and the wine."

This is the emblem of scarcity and famine, while the luxuries of the rich are left untouched.

So Matt. xxiv. 7: "And there shall be famines."

Verse 7. "And when He *had* opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast [living one] saying, 'Come and see.' And I looked, and behold a pale horse [a sallow or greenish horse]: and his name that sat on him *was* Death, and hell [Hades] followed with him. And power [authority] was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with [by] the wild beasts of the earth."

The first result of largely extended warfare is famine: the fields left uncultivated or devastated, then follows pestilence and death.

So Matt. xxiv. 7, 8: "And pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. But all these *are* the beginning of sorrows" (*or* throes).

The first four seals refer to the events of the first three years and a half of Daniel's last or seventieth week of years. The beginning of sorrows: afterwards come the times of great tribulation.

Verses 9-11. "And when He *had* opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long [*or* until when], O

Lord [Sovereign Lord], holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?' And white robes were given unto every one of them [each of them]; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled."

This fifth seal is largely and fully gone into by the Lord Jesus in Matt. xxiv. 9-22.

It is the time when the Antichrist, the lawless one, having broken his covenant and taken away the daily sacrifice at Jerusalem, sets up the abomination of desolation, and also sets himself in the temple of God, as God; when the godly flee, and persecution commences; the time of the great tribulation. Those slain are divided into two classes: those who are at first slain for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus—these are seen here as the souls under the altar; the other company are those subsequently slain because they will not worship the beast.

Verses 12-17. "And I beheld when He *had* opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there came a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken by a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and to the rocks, 'Fall on us, and hide us from *the* face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be [*or is*] able to stand?'"

This corresponds exactly with the words of the Lord in Matt. xxiv. 29: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn."

All these are premonitory signs; as yet the Son of Man Himself has not appeared. The sixth seal brings the prophecy up to this period, and there leaves it.

Thus we find that these six seals conduct us through a certain aspect of the scenes of the last seven years, till the period "immediately after the tribulation of those days."

In the next chapter the spirit of prophecy goes back and fills up the picture with another aspect of the same period.

CHAPTER VII.

Verse 1. "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that *the* wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree."

This chapter comes in, parenthetically, between the sixth and seventh seal, showing us certain things that must take place during the seven years, and previous to the opening of the seventh seal.

The four horses, the four winds, and the four angels are closely associated (see Zech. vi. 1-8). They represent the agency that God employs in His providential government on the earth.

Verses 2, 3. "And I saw another angel ascending from *the* east, having *the* seal of *the* living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, 'Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.'"

At the commencement of the last week of Daniel's seventy weeks of years, before any of the coming providential judgments of God on the earth can take place, certain of the servants of God will be sealed for preservation.

Before the going forth of the lawless one in imperial despotic power, and before the wars, famines, pestilences, and persecutions which will follow, as symbolised by the first five seals, these servants of God must be secured from danger.

Verse 4. "And I heard the number of them which were sealed; *and there were* sealed a hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand of all *the* tribes [every tribe] of the children of Israel."

Verses 5-8. "Of *the* tribe of Juda," &c., &c.

Whether we take the number one hundred and forty-four thousand literally or symbolically, they represent the preserved of Israel, the nucleus of the coming Millennial kingdom. These, according to

Psalm xci., will be preserved in the providence of God, under the especial charge of the elect angels, from all the dangers of this eventful period, and finally, with those saved of Israel, when the Deliverer comes (Rom. xi. 26), will compose the kingdom under the reign of the Messiah.

Verses 9, 10. "After this [these things] I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man [no one] could [was able to] number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood [standing] before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried [crying] with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.'"

Just as the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel for the land (Num. i. 47-50), so these great multitudes are not numbered for the earth in the Millennial kingdom. They have their portion in God, and their inheritance is heavenly. And they will not be taken exclusively from Israel, as were the hundred and forty-four thousand, but from both Jews and Gentiles of every nationality. For during this period of human activity and Satanic delusion the Holy Ghost, in the plenitude of His power "as the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth," will do a world-wide work, the results of which will be seen in this vast multitude who will not only stand firm, but will seal their testimony with their blood.

They ascribe their salvation to God in His sovereignty, and to the Lamb in His atoning sacrifice.

Verses 11, 12. "And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts [living ones], and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, 'Amen. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.'"

God is the God of angels as well as of the redeemed from among men; and angels share in the eternal results of redemption's work. Not as being saved out of evil, but as being preserved from evil; all things in heaven as well as in earth God having headed up in Christ (Eph. i. 10). Hence angels join in the praises of the redeemed—yet in a chorus of their own.

Verses 13-17. "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, 'What [Who] are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?' And I said unto him, 'Sir, thou knowest.' And he said to me, 'These are they which came

out of [the] great tribulation, and *have* washed their robes, and made them [their robes] white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve [religiously serve or worship] Him day and night in His [inner] temple : and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell [tabernacle] over them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in *the* midst of the throne shall feed [shepherdeth] them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters : and God shall wipe away all tears [every tear] from their eyes.' ”

One of the elders—one of those in the secret council of God—having an insight into what was passing in the mind of John, answers his mental inquiry. John had seen in symbol the Church on earth, and its course completed ; he had seen the risen saints of a former dispensation in glory, and the Church of the firstborn in their place of nearness and privilege—but who are these ?

The elder answers by putting into words the inquiries of John's mind.

On John's referring the question to the elder, he replies : “ These are the comers out of the great tribulation.” This great tribulation will take place during the second half of the week, as foretold by Daniel and by Christ. Part will be slain at the commencement, and part during the continuance of the persecution. They, having obtained the victory, wave the palm. They have washed their robes, and stand and minister before the throne. The glory of God overshadows them, and the Lamb that redeemed them is their Shepherd for ever. On earth they had hungered and thirsted, and been imprisoned, and out-cast. It is of them that the Lord speaks (in Matt. xxv. 35-40) as His brethren. But they will hunger and thirst no more ; and a Father's hand has for ever wiped off every tear.

This chapter gives us the earthly and the heavenly aspect of the last week of the seventy weeks.

On earth there are solemn judgments from God, and fierce persecution from man ; but God has His sealed and preserved ones amongst it all, and specially among the tribes of Israel.

In heaven there is calm, and triumph, and praise, and thanksgiving ; those who have suffered on earth, and come out from it all, leading the song, in which the angel hosts in full chorus join.

CHAPTER VIII.

Verse 1. "And when he *hath* opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about *the space of half an hour.*"

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither *have* entered into the heart of man, *the things which God hath* prepared for them that love Him," though "God *hath* revealed *them* unto us by His Spirit."

The contents of the seventh seal, the emblems therein presented to the dwellers in heaven, take all heaven by surprise. There is "silence in heaven about the space of half an hour," reminding us of Zech. ii. 13, Hab. ii. 20. The choir of heaven can find no language worthy of the occasion; hence there are no symbols presented to the eye of man, no language spoken to his ear. These are among the "unspeakable words" (2 Cor. xii. 4).

The opening of the sixth seal brought us to the signs as seen on earth immediately preceding the manifestation of the Son of Man (chap. vi. 12-17). The opening of the seventh seal brings us to the scenes which take place in heaven preceding His manifestation to the world. These scenes are described in the 19th chapter, verses 5-9—the marriage supper of the Lamb, with its glories and its joys.

Verse 2. "And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets."

Angelic ministry is connected with God's providential dealings with man. These seven trumpets show the providential judgments of God with the earth, during the first half of the last week of Daniel's seventy weeks of years—preparatory and warning judgments, previous to the pouring out of the vials in which are filled up the wrath of God, and which take place during the last half of the week.

Verse 3. "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which *was* before the throne."

The saints of God on earth during the seven years of Antichrist will be pre-eminently a praying people. A large portion of the Book of Psalms is the inspired expression of their thoughts and feelings Godward; and although these Psalms are adapted SPIRITUALLY to the experience of the people of God in all ages, LITERALLY, as to their scenes and circumstances, they are designed and adapted in a

peculiar manner to the wants of these servants of God, amidst the trials and persecutions of the latter days.

Verse 4. "And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."

The prayers of these saints, accompanied by the sweet savour of the name of Jesus, and in the value of His atoning sacrifice, ascend up and enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth (Ps. cxli. 2).

Verse 5. "And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast *it* into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."

The fire of the altar—the emblem of the searching, testing righteousness of God—not only has tested the sacrifice and found all perfect, but the same holiness and righteousness deals with sin on the earth. So, in Leviticus ix., x., the same fire which consumed on the altar the ascending offering and the fat, devoured the offerers of the strange fire. And the same God who accepts the prayers and praises of His people in the name of Jesus, responds in execution of righteous judgment to the cry of His oppressed.

Read *verses 6–13.*

These seven angels are the representatives of God's providential dealings with men in the way of judgment.

There is a striking similarity between the judgments under the first four angels and those inflicted upon the land of Egypt in the time of Moses; they are doubtless symbolic, yet they appear to be especially connected with the material elements of nature, as God's instruments for inflicting judgments upon man.

These judgments are at first partial—"the third part"—though warning is given of still heavier woes to come; under the *VIALS* they will be full and final.

CHAPTER IX.

Verses 1, 2. "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit [pit of the abyss]. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit,

as *the* smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit."

See here the righteous, retributive judgment of God. Jesus has been raised up to heaven and seated at the right hand of God, where there are pleasures for evermore. He has opened up a new and living way into the holiest, and has sent down from heaven the Holy Ghost, bringing saving, sanctifying, spiritual truth, as connected with everlasting life. Man having rejected this, God will allow Satan, a fallen angel, to bring in from the infernal depths beneath a strong delusion, leading to eternal destruction and woe.

"I saw a star fall [*or* fallen] from heaven unto the earth." This star appears to represent Satan as a fallen angel. (See Isa. xiv. 12; Luke. x. 18.)

The Spirit of God, speaking of Antichrist in 2 Thess. ii. 9-12, says, "Whose coming is after *the* working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe *a* lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Destructive error comes from beneath, from the place of endless woe; great and saving truths come down from above, from the place of eternal life and joy.

Verse 2. When Satan has power given him to bring in strong delusion, what can the light of nature and of reason avail? (2 Cor. iv. 4.)

Verse 3. "And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power."

"Out of the smoke"—that is, out of the delusion—"came forth locusts." Locusts are remarkable for their ravages of all that is fruitful and fair; such are destructive heresies, "seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. iv. 1; see also 2 Peter ii. 1, 2).

Verse 4. "And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only *those* men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads."

But not acting on nature—only on man—hence not literal or natural locusts; and those are exempted who have the seal of God.

Verses 5, 6. "And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and

their torment *was* as *the* torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."

Not complete spiritual death, not total hardness of heart; still a little feeling and consciousness of their spiritual condition, which they would gladly get rid of if they could, for the remains of conscience still torment them.

Verses 7, 8. "And the shapes of the locusts *were* like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, and their faces *were* as *the* faces of men. And they had hair as *the* hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions."

These delusions come with a power as irresistible as a charge of cavalry (as "horses prepared unto battle"); they are apparently of divine excellency ("crowns of gold"); having the appearance of reason and human intelligence ("faces of men"), combined with the attractiveness of gracefulness and beauty ("hair of women"); and taking firm hold on the mind as with the teeth of a lion.

Verse 9. "And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings *was* as *the* sound of chariots of many horses running to battle."

Their arguments appear to be unanswerable, having "the sound" of irresistible power—a torrent of words carrying all before it.

Verse 10. "And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power *was* to hurt men five months."

The tails represent the after consequences, and the effect of the doctrines is the sting. What is said of strong drink (Prov. xxiii. 32) may also be said of this strong delusion: "At *the* last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." The five months suggest a limited period known to God.

Verse 11. "And they had a king over them, *which* is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in *the* Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon."

The meaning of the name both in Hebrew and in Greek is "the destroyer," and evidently applies to Satan.

Verses 12-15. "One woe is past; *and*, behold, there come two woes more hereafter. And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar *which* is before

God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, "Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates." And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for *an* hour, and *a* day, and *a* month, and *a* year, for to slay the third part of men."

Four angels loosed having still greater power, for the four smallest portions of time—one year, one month, one day, one hour only—"to slay the third part." Spiritual death commences in time; a strong delusion is sent, "that they should believe *a* lie: that they all might be condemned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in un-righteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12). All this comes in answer to prayer, as is symbolised by "a voice from the four horns of the golden altar."

*Vers*e 16. "And the number of *the* army of the horsemen *were* two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them." An immense number, but not unlimited.

*Vers*es 17, 18, 19. "And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses *were* as *the* heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails *were* like unto serpents, *and* had heads, and with them they do hurt."

"Horses," "and them that sat on them:" this is Satan's grand army. Contrast chap. xix. 14: "And the armies *which were* in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." "Breastplates"—for defence of the vitals. "The heads"—the seat of intellect, strong and dignified. "Their mouths" symbolise their teaching and their doctrines. "Fire" is the emblem of strong spiritual influence; "smoke," of strong delusion; "brimstone," of that which increases the force of the fire and its torment.

*Vers*es 20, 21. "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."

All will not be given over to this spiritual delusion and death, yet

the remainder will not learn wisdom, nor repent. The strong delusion will be sent on those who have had the Gospel and rejected it, "because they had pleasure in unrighteousness," and no love to the truth. Meanwhile the idolatrous portion of the world will continue in their impious ways.

CHAPTER X.

Verse 1. "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow *was* upon *his* head, and his face *was* as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire."

The angel is the emblem of providential agency, inasmuch as God's providential rule over the earth is carried on under the ministration of angels. See especially the Book of Daniel.

The cloud may be regarded as symbolic of mystery and majesty; the rainbow reminds us that in God's providential actings He has ever regard to His covenant with Noah (Gen. ix. 12-17). God's ways are bright with heavenly glory like the sun; they are also stable and holy like pillars of fire.

The tenth, and part of the eleventh chapter, comes in between the sixth and seventh trumpets, just as the seventh chapter intervenes between the sixth and seventh seals.

Verses 2, 3. "And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and *his* left *foot* on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roareth: and when he *had* cried, seven thunders uttered their voices."

God in His providence claims possession and authority over sea and earth.

God speaks by His providence in a voice of majesty and power; the perfection of wisdom and knowledge is manifested in what His providence reveals. But His judgments are a great deep, grand, mysterious, but incomprehensible to the mind of man; "the thunder of His power who can understand" (Job xvi. 14).

Verse 4. "And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, 'Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.'"

There are things revealed by God in His providence, making known, it may be, to angels the manifold wisdom of God, but not interpreted

to men. So also there is more communicated to the minister of God's word, than is proper or possible to communicate to others; necessary indeed to his own soul's establishment, and profitable for his general ministry; and yet others may not be prepared to receive it. Paul, when caught up to the third heavens, "heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. xii. 4).

Verses 5-7. "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein *are*, and the earth, and the things that therein *are*, and the sea, and the things which *are* therein, that there should be time [delay] no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He *hath* declared to His servants the prophets."

Compare Dan. xii. 6, 7: "And *one* said to the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, 'How long *shall it be to the end of these wonders?*' And I heard the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever that *it shall be* for a time, times, and a half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these *things* shall be finished." These two visions are very similar, with this distinction: the vision in Revelation refers to the commencement of the great tribulation, during the last three years and a half; that in Daniel to the close of the period. During this latter time the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation set up.

This period of three and a half years is variously described as half of the week, "time, times, and a half" (Dan. xii. 7; Rev. xii. 14); "time, times, and *the* dividing of a time" (Dan. vii. 25); "forty and two months" (Rev. xiii. 5); "one thousand two hundred *and* three-score days" (Rev. xii. 6)—thus given in every variety of form, in order that it might not be wrested to mean anything else.

The truth which the angel so solemnly affirms is, that from the days of the sounding of the seventh angel there should be no longer any delay in the fulfilment of the prophecies of God. Compare with this Ezek. xii. 21-28.

The seventh angel brings in the crisis when Satan is expelled from the heavenlies. (See Rev. xii. 7-9.) The mystery of God is then finished, that the throne of iniquity should seemingly have fellowship with Him (Ps. xciv. 20). Satan's usurpation of the seat of royal

power over the earth, in the heavenlies, as the god of this world, is then at an end. The establishment of the kingdom of God of which all the prophets witness then commences; it dates from that moment, although much takes place on earth during the three and a half years yet remaining before its full manifestation, at the appearing of the Son of Man.

Verses 8-11. "And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, 'Go *and* take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.' And I went unto the angel, *and* said unto him, 'Give me the little book.' And he said unto me, 'Take *it*, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.' And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, 'Thou must prophesy again before *many* peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.'"

The study of unfulfilled prophecy may be interesting, yet the result of realising these realities of appalling judgment is bitter. Prophetic truth is sweet (Ps. cxix. 103) in the reception of it, yet the solemn truths are bitter to the serious and reflecting soul, and testimony to it is a weighty responsibility (Ezek. iii. 1-14).

CHAPTER XI.

Verses 1. "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, 'Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.'"

The Book of Revelation, from the fourth chapter to the nineteenth, is occupied with the last week of Daniel's seventy weeks of years.

In this eleventh chapter we have another emblematic vision of the first half of this last week.

In Dan. ix. 26, 27, we read that after the cutting off of Messiah the people of the prince that shall come (that is, the Roman people, to which empire the prince—that is, Antichrist—belongs) should destroy the city and the sanctuary; which prophecy was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus.

Antichrist, when he comes, confirms a covenant with the mass of

the people for one week, or seven years—the seventieth week of this prophecy; and in the midst of the week he breaks the covenant and takes away the daily sacrifice, which by his covenant he had permitted to be offered.

It is at this time he sets up the abomination of desolation in the holy place (Matt. xxiv. 15), and sits as God in the temple of God (2 Thess. ii. 4). From these prophecies we learn that a temple at Jerusalem, the Holy City, will again be regarded as the temple of God, and the sacrifices offered upon the altar will be owned by Him.

What is thus foretold in prophecy is in this eleventh chapter of Revelation presented in symbolic vision.

A reed like a rod is given to John to measure the temple of God, and the altar, and the worshippers, signifying that these things are taken account of and recognised by God. (Compare Ezek. xl. 3–5, and Rev. xxi. 15–17.) It is possible that the Mosque of Omar, or Dome of the Rock, with its sacred enclosure, may be appropriated for this purpose.

Verse 2. “‘But the court which *is* without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot *forty and two* months.’”

It appears that this temple, like the temple of Herod, will have its court of the Gentiles, which God disowns; indeed the presence of the Gentiles in Jerusalem during this period, when it is styled the holy city, is regarded as a profanation and as a trampling under foot. It will be observed that the term “holy city” occurs in Dan. ix. 24: “Seventy weeks are determined [cut out, *or* divided] upon thy people and upon thy holy city.” Again, Matt. xxvii. 53, after the death of Christ, or cutting off of Messiah; and also here in Rev. xi. 2; whereas in verse 8, after the slaughter of the two witnesses, it is spoken of as “the great city,” and “spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.”

Verses 3–6. “‘And I will give *power* unto My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and *the* two candlesticks [lampsteads] standing before the God of the earth. And if any *man* will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any *man* will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in *the* days of their prophecy: and have power over waters

to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.'"

When there is that on the earth that God can own, He raises up a testimony against all that is connected with it of which He disapproves.

When there is a temple at Jerusalem recognised as the temple of God, and offerings presented on the altar owned as the "daily sacrifice," God will raise up His two faithful witnesses to stand before Him, and to bear their testimony for Him as "the God of the earth"—men filled with spiritual power, as foreshadowed by the two olive trees seen in Zechariah's vision, and shining with clear and steady light, like the lampstand in the prophecy (chap. iv. 2, 3); men acting in the spirit and power of Moses and Elijah: like Moses, having authority to smite the earth with all plagues (Ex. vii. to xi.); like Elijah, calling fire from heaven to devour their adversaries (2 Kings i. 10-12); and also, like Elijah, having power to shut heaven (1 Kings xvii. 1; James v. 17) during the days of their prophecy, one thousand two hundred *and* threescore days—that is, three years and six months—testifying for God, like Moses in Egypt in the midst of the Gentile nations, and like Elijah amongst the people of Israel.

The combined period of the testimony of John the Baptist and the public testimony of Christ was seven years—from A.D. 26 till A.D. 33—the first three years and a half being occupied by the testimony of John the Baptist in the spirit and power of Elijah, and the latter three years and a half with the active service and testimony of the true Christ Himself; for it was after John was cast into prison that "from that time Jesus began to preach" (Matt. iv. 12, 17; Mark i. 14). Similarly, the last week of Daniel's seventy, which is the subject of the Book of Revelation from the fourth chapter till the nineteenth, is divided into two halves, the first one thousand two hundred and threescore days being occupied with the prophecy of the two witnesses, and the latter three years and a half by the active persecutions of the Antichrist.

Verses 7-10. "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And *they* of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead

bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another ; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.' ”

From the time that Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel, and sets himself up as God in the temple of God, he who had previously wielded the authority of the Roman empire in its last form—an authority originally given to Nebuchadnezzar from the God of heaven—from henceforth receives his commission from the bottomless pit ; the dragon gives “ him his power, and his throne, and great authority ” (chap. xiii. 2). From this time he who before patronised now persecutes ; and these two faithful witnesses for God are the firstfruits of that fearful persecution which marks the time of the tribulation such as never had been, or shall be again ; their enemies exult over them, but the triumph of the wicked is but short.

Verses 11–13. “ ‘ And after three days and a half *the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet ; and a great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, “ Come up hither.” And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud ; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand : and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.’ ”*

The three days and a half during which the bodies of the two witnesses are left unburied correspond with the three years and a half of the great tribulation.

And as in their slaughter the two witnesses are the firstfruits of those who will be slain for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, so in their resurrection they are the firstfruits of the slain ones who will be raised, according to Rev. xx. 4 : “ I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God ” (the first slain remnant), and also those “ which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither *had* received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands ” (those subsequently martyred) ; these and the dead in Christ which rise first, and those caught up “ to meet the Lord in the air ” (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17), together share in the first resurrection.

This manifestation of the power of God in resurrection, together with the earthquake which accompanied it, strikes temporary terror into the hearts of men, who give glory to the God of heaven.

Verse 14. "The second woe is past; *and*, behold, the third woe cometh quickly."

The first woe refers to the judgments under the fifth trumpet (chap. ix. 12); the second woe to those under the sixth trumpet; the third woe follows under the seventh.

Verse 15. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of *this* world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.'"

The seventh trumpet introduces the war in heaven, described in chap. xii. 7-9, when Satan and his angels are cast out of the heavenlies, which is the centre fact of the Book of Revelation, and the great crisis in this world's history; for "now is *the* judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John xii. 31). From this period, when the usurper is cast down, is dated the commencement of the kingdom of God and His Christ over the earth.

Verses 16-18. "And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, 'We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken *to Thee* Thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.'"

The redeemed in heavenly glory share in the triumph, and recognise that the fulfilment of the Divine purposes and plans will follow in due course. God is recognised in His Divine glory, omnipotence, eternity of being, and sovereignty as taking to Himself that power and manifesting those perfections which will ultimately establish the kingdom of God and Messiah's reign over the earth.

Verse 19. "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."

All these things are in fulfilment of the determinate counsels of God, whereby He makes manifest His faithfulness, and righteousness, and power; this is symbolised by the temple opened in heaven, the ark of the covenant seen, and the accompanying signs. How different the opening and closing of this chapter! In the first verse we have the

temple of God ON EARTH, with its altar and its worship taken account of by God, during the first three years and a half ; when that time is ended another period begins, when the Antichrist having set himself up as God in this temple of God, the abomination of desolation is seen standing in the holy place (Matt. xxiv. 15). In the closing verse of this chapter it is the temple of God IN HEAVEN which is opened, and in it is seen the ark of His covenant with its propitiatory or mercy-seat, and the cherubim of glory overshadowing it. Beautiful and expressive type of the incarnate Word, whom God hath set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood, endued with the plenitude of spiritual power and glory !

When again the nations of the earth and their rulers take counsel against Jehovah, and against His Messiah, saying, “ ‘ Let us break their bands asunder . . . ’ He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh : the sovereign Lord shall have them in derision ; ” for He will yet set His King upon His holy hill of Zion (Ps. ii.). For though the nations rage and the people imagine a vain thing, Jehovah is in His holy temple—Jehovah’s throne is in the heavens. When the God of glory thundereth, well may all the earth keep silence before Him.

CHAPTER XII.

Verse 1. “ And there appeared a great wonder [*or sign*] in heaven ;
a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet,
and upon her head a crown [*victor’s crown*] of twelve stars.”

There are various styles in which the Spirit of God has communicated the Divine mind to us in the sacred word, such as, plain statement, type, figurative language, parable, and emblem or symbol. Figurative language abounds in the Psalms and prophecies. In the Book of Revelation truth is made known by signs or symbols (chap. i. 1), and these signs or symbols are interpreted in plain and simple language.

The truth which is expressed in Isa. xxvi. in the figurative language of the prophecy is presented to us in emblematic form in Rev. xii. When these two chapters are placed side by side, they mutually explain each other.

“ A great wonder [*or sign*] in heaven.” The facts here presented are not looked at as if seen on earth, but as shown by the light of heaven.

“ A woman clothed with the sun.” We have here an emblem of Israel under the new covenant. The figures representing Israel under

the former covenant are Hagar the bondwoman, Sinai in Arabia, and Jerusalem as it now is (Gal. iv. 24-26); the figures of Israel under the new covenant are Sarah, Mount Zion, and Jerusalem above.

Israel under the new covenant is here represented as clothed with the sun, for "this is the name wherewith she shall be called, 'Jehovah-Tsidkeenu'"—"Jehovah our righteousness" (Jer. xxxiii. 16). Jehovah shall be unto her, her everlasting light, and her God her glory (Isa. lx. 19).

"The moon under her feet." Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, so the types and ordinances of the law reflect the glory of Christ; but Israel under the covenant of grace will be no longer subject to ordinances, or in bondage to the letter of the law, yet these ordinances, put in their proper place, will be employed for benefit and blessing.

"Upon her head a crown [victor's crown] of twelve stars." The twelve tribes of Israel, as overcomers by faith, will be associated with the Messiah in His Millennial reign as a royal nation, as well as a holy people.

Verse 2. "And she being with child cried, travailling in birth, and pained to be delivered."

What is here presented in symbol is in Isa. xxvi. expressed in figurative language as the utterance of those godly ones in Israel who, during the first three years and a half of the reign of Antichrist, have passed through deep exercises of soul. These experiences are more fully developed in the Psalms, especially in the first book from Ps. i. to xli., while the remnant are in the land. Their language, according to Isa. xxvi. 17, is "like as a woman with child, *that* draweth near *the* time of her delivery, is in pain, *and* crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in Thy sight, O Jehovah."

Verse 3. "And there appeared another wonder [*or* sign] in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads."

Here the empire of Antichrist—the wild beast of Rev. xiii. and Dan. vii.—is shown in the light of heaven, as seen at this crisis of the world's history, when the old dragon—the Devil, or Satan, will impart his own character and energy to it.

"Having seven heads and ten horns." The seven heads represent the combination of every form of governmental power, the result of the experience of former ages in the art of government, and the ten horns represent the empire in its last form when divided into ten kingdoms.

Verse 4. "And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."

The stars of heaven here symbolise the principalities and powers of wickedness in the heavenlies, under the control of Satan, and by him brought to operate on the affairs of men.

The dragon or Satan will energise the kingdom of Antichrist in its last and fully developed form, with its tenfold confederacy of kingdoms aided by the wicked spirits in heavenly places. He here appears standing ready to crush the first open manifestation of resistance to his authority.

Verse 5. "And she brought forth a man child [male son], who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron."

The believing portion of Israel during the times of Antichrist is here represented and elsewhere as divided into three companies. First, the man child—that is, the remnant slain at the beginning of Antichrist's persecution, for their positive resistance to him. Second, the remnant of the woman's seed (ver. 17), who are afterwards slaughtered for their passive refusal to receive his mark. Third, those who are preserved through all the trials, and brought into the Millennial kingdom.

The man child here spoken of is the representation in symbol of those who, as the result of deep exercises of soul (see Isa. xxvi.), will come forth in the full vigour of their zeal, and claim the kingdom for God, for Messiah, and for His people, and who at the very onset resist the assumptions of Antichrist.

Messiah according to Ps. ii. is to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and in Rev. ii. 26 the Lord Jesus promises the same privilege to the overcomer. And Jehovah speaks of Israel as His battleaxe and weapons of war in Jer. li. 20–23, as the instrumentality by which He will bring all nations into subjection to Himself.

"And her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne."

The godly in Israel had for some time suspected the real character of Antichrist; their estimate of him is expressed in Isa. xxvi. 10: "Let favour be showed to *the* wicked [the lawless one], *yet* will he not learn righteousness: in *the* land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold *the* majesty of Jehovah." They know also that, according to Dan. vii. 27, "*the* kingdom and dominion, and *the* greatness of *the* kingdom under *the* whole heaven, shall be given to *the* people of *the* saints of *the* Most High." When at length the lawless

one throws off the mask, they resist him, but in vain. This is shown in vision in Dan. vii. 21 : "I beheld, and *the* same horn made war with *the* saints, and prevailed against them." So also Ps. lxxix. 1-3 :—

"O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance ;
 Thy holy temple *have* they defiled ;
 They *have* laid Jerusalem on heaps.
The dead bodies of Thy servants have they given *to be* meat unto *the* fowls of
 the heaven,
The flesh of Thy saints unto *the* beasts of *the* earth.
 Their blood *have* they shed like water round about Jerusalem ;
 And *there was* none to bury *them*."

This is also figuratively foretold in Isa. xxvi. 18 :—

"We have been with child,
 We have been in pain,
 We *have* as it were brought forth wind ;
 We have not wrought any deliverance in *the* earth ;
 Neither have *the* inhabitants of *the* world fallen."

This is the first slain remnant, as shown in symbol under the fifth seal in Rev. vi. 9 : "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." These falling short, through their death, of taking their part in the Millennial reign of the Messiah on earth, will have, instead, their portion in the heavenly kingdom.

Moreover, they share in the first resurrection. Chap. xx. 4 : "*I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." So also Isa. xxvi. 19 :—

"Thy dead *men* shall live,
Together with my dead body shall they arise.
 Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust :
 For thy dew *is as the* dew of herbs,
 And the earth shall cast out *the* dead."

Verse 6. "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days."

The witnesses for God and Christ represented by the man child having been slain, the other godly ones of the nation represented by "the woman"—as many as are able—make their escape, thus obeying the command of the Lord Jesus in Matt. xxiv. 15, 16 : "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in *the* holy place (whoso readeth, let him under-

stand), then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains," &c. They also accept the invitation of Jehovah in Isa. xxvi. 20:—

“Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers,
And shut thy doors about thee :
Hide thyself as it were for a little moment,
Until *the* indignation be overpast.”

God will preserve Israel nationally from the persecuting power of Antichrist during the time of his continuance, or actings, which lasts three years and a half. (See Rev. xiii. 5: “And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue [to act] forty *and* two months.” Also Dan. vii. 25: “And he shall speak *great* words against *the* Most High, and shall wear out the saints of *the* Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and *the* dividing of time.”) This is the period of the great tribulation.

The twelve hundred and sixty days of Rev. xii. 6, forty and two months of xiii. 5, time and times and *the* dividing of time (Dan. vii. 25, and Rev. xii. 14), all relate to the same period of three and a half years, the last half week of Daniel’s seventy weeks of years.

Verses 7, 8. “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.”

This scene was presented in vision to the Apostle John as symbolic of a future event, to take place at the great crisis of this world’s history.

For long there has been a conflict going on in the heavenly places between the principalities and powers of light and the principalities and powers of darkness. The Book of Daniel has lifted the curtain and given us an insight into these transactions. Chap. x. 13: “But *the* prince of *the* kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with *the* kings of Persia.” Verses 20, 21: “Then said he, ‘Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with *the* prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, *the* prince of Grecia shall come. But I will show thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and *there is* none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.” At the beginning of Daniel’s supplication the angel was sent to him, but was hindered three whole weeks in his coming by these conflicts in the heavenlies. These princes of Persia and Grecia are not earthly potentates, but heavenly powers. In Eph. vi. 12 we read: “We wrestle not against flesh and

blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*." The Church's conflict is not with the Canaanites on earth, but with these spirits of wickedness in heavenly places; but the time is coming when the great and decisive conflict will take place; this is the subject of this vision: there is war in heaven.

In striking contrast, at the same crisis, there is war on earth. The beast, energised by the dragon, makes war against the saints of God, and apparently overcomes them; but though he sheds their blood and kills their bodies, in reality they overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, and exchange an earthly kingdom for a heavenly. They had stood up for God and His Christ, and on earth had wrought no deliverance. Michael the archangel, and the angels under him, stand up for God and Christ in heaven, and obtain the victory. Satan and his hosts lose for ever their authority in the heavens, and their power for a season is transferred to the earth. Thus the witnesses for God on earth, apparently overcome, but in reality victorious, exchange an earthly kingdom for a heavenly. On the other hand, the hosts of Satan, the enemies of God and man, are effectually defeated, and obliged to exchange a position of heavenly power and dominion for one of earthly defeat.

Verse 9. "And the great dragon was cast out, *that* old serpent, called *the* Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast *out* into the earth, and his angels were cast *out* with him."

The titles given to the "great dragon" are significant. As the "old serpent" he deceives the whole world from Paradise to the commencement of the Millennial period, and then again at the close for a little season; as "the Devil"—that is, "*Diabolus*," the false accuser—he accuses the saints before God day and night (Job i., ii.); and as "Satan"—that is, the adversary—he persecutes them. . But from this time his influence in heaven is over; on earth he deludes, accuses, and persecutes with greater malignity than ever for a limited period. His angels share his overthrow.

Verses 10, 11. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, 'Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And ~~they~~ overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto *the* death.'

The redeemed in heavenly glory celebrate the triumph. The

resistance of the martyred remnant symbolised by the man child gained the victory, in fact; for although slain they overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony; and the result of this is, the accuser and his angels will be permitted no longer to carry on their opposition and their accusations in the heavenly places. Jehovah of hosts having called in the angels of light to decide the contest, thus establishing His kingdom in the heavens before He makes the foes of Messiah His footstool, and sets up His dominion on the earth. Thus "Jehovah's sword is bathed in heaven" before it accomplishes its appointed work on earth. Isa. xxxiv. 5.

This outburst of triumph is similar to that in chap. xi. 15 on the sounding of the seventh trumpet. From this period, when Satan and his angels are expelled from the heavenlies, the kingdom of God and His Christ over this earth is dated, and from this time the accuser of the brethren is cast down.

Verse 12. "Therefore rejoice, *ye* heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath *but* a short time.'"

While there is joy in heaven, there is woe on earth, for though the citadel is taken the outposts have yet to be captured; from henceforth the battle-field is the world. This introduces the great tribulation of three years and a half, when the enemy, no longer opposing from a distance, comes down to wrestle hand to hand with the inhabitants of the earth.

Verse 13. "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child."

Though the man child has been destroyed—that is, the first faithful witnesses for God and Christ have been slain—persecution still continues.

In like manner, when Herod had killed James the brother of John with the sword, he proceeded further to take Peter also (Acts xii. 1-3).

James, Peter, and John are three striking representatives of the three remnants of Israel—James, a type of the first slain remnant; Peter, of those afterwards put to death, or persecuted, because they would not worship the beast and his image; John, of those preserved through all the scenes of trial for the Millennial kingdom.

So the souls under the altar (Rev. vi. 9-11) are told to wait "until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled."

The same Herod who killed James and imprisoned Peter subse-

quently came under the retributive judgment of God for accepting, like Antichrist, Divine honours from man (Acts xii. 21-23).

Verse 14. "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."

The wings of the eagle are in Scripture symbolical of the uplifting and sustaining power of the Holy Ghost, as in Ex. xix. 4: "I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto Myself." Again, Deut. xxxii. 11, 12:—

"As an eagle stirreth up her nest,
Fluttereth over her young,
Spreadeth abroad her wings,
Taketh them,
Beareth them on her wings,
So the Lord (Jehovah) alone did lead him,
And there was no strange god with him."

And Isa. xl. 31:—

"But they that wait upon *the* Lord (Jehovah) shall renew *their* strength;
They shall mount up with wings as eagles."

Thus spiritual strength will be imparted to the people of Israel under the new covenant, that they may be able to flee to some place of security and shelter from the storm of persecution, which will rage for three years and a half. (See verse 6; Isa. xxvi. 20.)

Verses 15-17. "And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

The enemy, as the serpent in his subtilty, raises up the masses of the people in a flood of opposition; but God by means of some natural interposition frustrates his efforts; thereupon as the dragon he persecutes. But "when *the* enemy shall come in like a flood, *the* Spirit of Jehovah shall lift up a standard against him" (Isa. lix. 19). Though the enemy may "cast out of his mouth"—that is, raise up at his commandment—a flood of persecution, God will not only give spiritual strength and sustainment, but He knows how to employ earthly agencies to frustrate the designs of the adversary.

These godly ones against whom the fury of Satan is directed

combine the strictest observance of the commandments of God—for their delight is in the law of Jehovah—with the testimony for Jesus Christ ; they will be, in a word, believing Israelites.

CHAPTER XIII.

Verse 1. “And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast [wild beast] rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns [diadems], and upon his heads *the* name of blasphemy.”

In this chapter we have the New Testament aspect of that which is the subject of prophecy in Dan. vii. To Daniel, when that vision was given, the scenes were future, with the exception of that part which refers to the Babylonian empire ; but to us, the first, second, third, and fourth empires have become matters of history, up to the development of the last form of the fourth or Roman empire, which is the subject of Rev. xiii. Daniel beholds, in vision, the four winds of heaven striving upon the great sea (the Mediterranean Sea), and he saw four great beasts coming up from the sea.

John stood upon the sand of the sea, and beheld a beast rise up out of the sea. Daniel records the commencement of these empires when they first arose as the results of the conflict between the various nations of the earth, and John the scenes connected with the close.

The *Greek* word *thērion*, rendered beast here, is a different word to that used in Rev. iv. 7, which is *zōon*, signifying a living being ; *thērion* means a beast of the desert, a wild, ravenous beast. This is the fourth beast of Daniel’s vision, and it here appears in its last form. The first was the Babylonian, the second the Medeo-Persian, the third the Grecian, and the fourth the Roman empire, which has been in existence for upwards of 2000 years.

“Having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns” (*or* diadems). The seven heads may be regarded as representing seven different forms of government, and the ten horns, with the ten crowns or diadems, the tenfold division of the Roman empire in its final form, with the reigning sovereigns, a confederacy of kingdoms, composing the empire of the beast or Antichrist.

“And upon his heads *the* name of blasphemy.” The seven heads represent government in its various forms, not exercised for the glory of God and the maintenance of righteousness, peace, and order upon the earth, but in blasphemous rejection of Divine sovereignty, in

contrast to Rom. xiii. 1-5, where all authority for the repression of evil and the encouragement of good is attributed to God.

Verse 2. "And the beast [wild beast] which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet *were* as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as *the* mouth of a lion : and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat [throne], and great authority."

"Like unto a LEOPARD, and his feet *were* the *feet* of a BEAR." This wild beast or kingdom of Antichrist will have the outward refinement, cultivation, and taste of the GRECIAN empire, combined with the rapacity and encroachment of the MEDEO-PERSIAN. "His mouth as *the* mouth of a LION:" that is, speaking with the imperial authority of the BABYLONIAN empire, thus uniting the characteristics of the first universal kingdoms.

"And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat [throne], and great authority." Kingly power among the Gentiles, as it was first given by God to Nebuchadnezzar, the head of the Babylonish empire, is thus described in Dan. ii. 37, 38: "Thou, O king, *art* a king of kings: for *the* God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever *the* children of men dwell, *the* beasts of *the* field and *the* fowls of *the* heaven hath He given into thine hand, and *hath* made thee ruler over them all. Thou *art* this head of GOLD." Corresponding with Rom. xiii. 2: "*The* powers that be are ordained of God." Kingly authority in its first and purest form is represented by the head of GOLD (Dan. ii. 32, 38). It is that which is exercised in the presence and fear of God, as maintaining His authority in the earth, for the punishment of evildoers and the reward of them that do well. "He that ruleth over men *must be* just, ruling in *the* fear of God" (2 Sam. xxiii. 3).

The laws of the Medes and Persians restrained the power of the sovereign, even when he would act for God (Dan. vi.). This form of government is represented by the breast and arms of SILVER (Dan. ii. 32, 39). Military power is represented by the belly and thighs of BRASS (Dan. ii. 32, 39).

In the feet and toes of the image IRON is mingled with the MIREY CLAY (Dan. ii. 33, 41-43). This is the lowest form of kingly rule, and is based on the theory that authority originates with the people. When this principle is universally recognised then is the opportunity for Satan to come in and to seize the reins of government, for he is the god of this world—"the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. ii. 2). This leads to the inversion of the entire order; instead of authority coming down from the God of heaven, for righteousness and good, it

is authority, from the bottomless pit and from Satan, for iniquity and evil (Rev. xi. 7 ; xiii. 2).

For the first three years and a half of his reign, Antichrist is the people's king—the people give him his authority and his crown (Rev. vi. 2) ; for the last three years and a half he is Satan's representative—the dragon gives him his throne.

Verse 3. "And I saw one of the heads as it were wounded to [unto] death ; and his deadly wound was healed : and all the world wondered after the beast."

He that is at the head of one of these forms of government, the beast or Antichrist, receives a deadly wound by a sword (see ver. 14)—a wound which, under ordinary circumstances, would be certainly mortal or unto death, and yet by some extraordinary means he recovers. This is Satan's counterfeit of the death and resurrection of Christ ! For as the Lord Jesus Christ was God manifest in flesh, so Antichrist will be Satan manifested in the flesh. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ had comparatively little effect upon the nations of the earth ; but when Antichrist is mortally wounded and healed there will be great wonder—it will be a miracle of Satan, known far and wide.

Verse 4. "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast : and they worshipped the beast, saying, 'Who *is* like unto the beast ? who is able to make war with him ?'"

The worship of the world will be transferred from God, who raised up Christ from the dead, and gave Him glory (1 Pet. i. 21), and offered to the dragon, who gives his power unto the beast, and also to the beast or Antichrist, who exercises this power.

Verses 5-8. "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies ; and power was given unto him to continue [to act] forty *and* two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them : and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of *the* world [whose names are not written from the foundation of *the* world in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain]."

As the Lord Jesus spake not His own words, but the words which were given Him of His Father, whom He glorified (John vii. 16 ;

Rev. i. 1), so, on the other hand, the words spoken by Antichrist are inspired by Satanic subtilty of wondrous depth but of blasphemous tendency, and this continues during the forty and two months, or three years and a half, during which time he persecutes and puts to death all who will not worship him. His authority is world-wide, and so is his worship, except by those whose names were written from the foundation of the world in the Lamb's Book of Life. The tabernacle or citizenship of these saints is in heaven, in contrast with those who are styled dwellers upon the earth.

Compare these verses with Dan. vii. 8: "And, behold, in this horn *were* eyes like *the* eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." Verses 20-22: "Even *of* that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look *was* more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and *the* same horn made war with *the* saints, and prevailed against them; until *the* Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to *the* saints of *the* Most High." Verse 25: "And he shall speak *great* words against *the* Most High, and shall wear out the saints of *the* Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and *the* dividing of time." Chap. xi. 36: "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against *the* God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished." See also 2 Thess. ii. 4: "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all *that is* called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

Verses 9, 10. "If any *man* have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth *into* captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with *the* sword must be killed with *the* sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."

This is the word for the spiritually minded.

During this period of the kingdom of the beast, open resistance is in vain. Steadfast refusal to worship the beast or to receive his mark, faith in God, and patient endurance, is that which alone remains to God's servants until the coming of the Son of Man and the execution of judgment, and the time when the saints possess the kingdom.

If the sword is taken, and resistance is attempted, it will prove in vain; nothing is left to the saints but faithful testimony and faithful endurance.

Verse 11. "And I beheld another [wild] beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon."

The first beast ariseth out of the sea, for his kingdom is the result of the tumultuous agitation of the masses; the second beast comes up out of the earth—it is the outcome of earthly wisdom, earthly science, and human progress; and, just as the lawlessness which began to work in the apostle's times will be headed up in the lawless one, even so, scepticism, infidelity, science falsely so called, and the wisdom of the human mind which has cast off the fear of God, will be fully developed in the second beast. Professedly its strength consists in the lowliness of its pretension and the gentleness of its persuasion, but in reality it is loud, dogmatic, and overbearing—its horns are the horns of a lamb, but it speaks as a dragon.

Verses 12–17. “And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast [wild beast] before him [in his presence], and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders [signs], so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in *the* sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the* means of *those* miracles which he had power to do in *the* sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by *a* sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and [to] cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, *both* small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

The lawless one opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, and is worshipped; thus he may be styled the Antigod. At the same time he will counterfeit the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and oppose Him; he is thus the Antichrist. And as the Holy Ghost by His miracles, wonders, and signs glorifies the Father and the Son, and maintains their authority, so the false prophet will perform his mighty acts for the establishment of the kingdom of the lawless one, who opposes both the Father and the Son.

This second beast is the false prophet (chap. xix. 20) whose lying wonders are performed in the interests of the first beast, causing the inhabitants of the earth to worship him whose deadly wound was healed.

He also imitates the miracles performed by Elijah, in causing fire to come down from heaven in the sight of men—probably as the out-

come of scientific discovery connected with electricity—deceiving the people of the earth by his signs and lying wonders (Matt. xxiv. 24; 2 Thess. ii. 8–12). He persuades men to make an image to the beast that had the wound by a sword, and did live, thus inducing them to return to idolatry in its grossest form; he also has power by some means, either supernatural or in appearance, to give life to the image of the beast, and to cause it to speak. He, moreover, enforces the worship of the beast, and the receiving of his mark, by the severest penalties, so that those who resist will be subjected either to death, or to the suffering of hunger, thirst, nakedness, imprisonment, banishment, and prevented from either buying or selling. Hence the words of the Lord Jesus to those who have befriended these persecuted ones, in Matt. xxv. 34–40. For those whom the Lord there acknowledges as His brethren are those who by reason of these persecutions will be scattered amongst the various nations of the earth.

Verse 18. “Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is *the* number of a man; and his number *is* six hundred threescore and six.”

Six is the number of earthly and human perfectness, but short of Divine perfection, which is symbolised by the number seven.

The earth was made in six days; and on the sixth day man was created, the most perfect of earthly beings.

The Lawless One, or Antichrist, will probably be an example of humanity in its fullest earthly perfection, at the same time denying the God who made him.

In body, like Absalom, “from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head” without blemish; and, like Saul, pre-eminent among his fellows, but it is fallen humanity—man without God. [6.]

In soul he will probably be a philanthropist of the first order. By his human affection, sympathy, and large-heartedness attracting universal admiration, but without the love of God. [60.]

In spirit, of gigantic intellect, stupendous genius, and intelligence, having the appearance of spirituality, but destitute of the Spirit of God. [600.]

There is deep wisdom here. The above is given as a suggestion; let those who have understanding examine into its truth.

CHAPTER XIV.

Verse 1. "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with Him a hundred forty *and* four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads."

In striking contrast with that anarchy, confusion, and evil, the subject of the preceding chapter, John now contemplates a far different scene.

"I looked, and, lo." Here is another of those *N.B.*'s which point out subjects of peculiar interest and importance.

"A Lamb," that is, "a young lamb" [arnion]. This is not the word for "lamb" employed by John the Baptist, which is "amnos," when he says, "Behold the Lamb of God" (John i. 29, 36). He is indeed the same person, but in a different character and position. Not the Lamb for a burnt-offering, not Jesus come to suffer, and to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; but as a Lamb in the resurrection power of an endless life, the same as in chapter v. 6, the Lamb in everlasting glory; not as He is seen in type or shadow in Gen. xxii. 6, as the Isaac going to Mount Moriah for sacrifice; not as seen on earth setting His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem, but as the risen One in the vigour of immortal youth.

"Stood," perfect participle, that is, "having stood and standing," the same designation and same position as in chapter v. 6. "And I beheld, and, lo, in *the* midst of the throne . . . stood a Lamb as it had been slain." In chapter v. He is seen surrounded by those who share in the triumphs of the skies (a heavenly scene), but in chapter xiv. He is in the midst of those who are engaged in the fierce conflict that is going on below (an earthly scene).

"On the Mount Sion." There are two mountains in Jerusalem which are often confounded: Mount Moriah and Mount Zion. Mount Moriah was the place where Abraham offered up his son Isaac; the mount on which the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite was situated; where David built an altar, and offered sacrifice unto Jehovah, when the angel stretched out his hand over Jerusalem to destroy it (2 Sam. xxiv.); the mount on which Solomon's Temple was erected (2 Chron. iii. 1).

Zion, on the other hand, was the stronghold of David, and between the two mounts was that chasm, the Tyropean valley, which was spanned by the ascent which the Queen of Sheba so wondered at.

It was probably on Mount Zion that Solomon erected his royal residence.

In this verse Mount Sion is symbolical. As Mount Sinai is typical of the demands and penalties of law, so Mount Sion is the emblem of the sovereignty of grace. Heb. xii. 18-24 contrasts the two: "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched," that is, Mount Sinai, with its demands and penalties, but to Mount Sion, where grace triumphant reigns. Grace has brought us there, as it will hereafter bring those mentioned in this first verse.

"And with Him a hundred forty *and* four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads."

Here it is not the sacrificial Lamb on His way to Calvary, with His twelve disciples around Him, who afterwards forsook Him; but the Lamb in resurrection vigour, surrounded by the twelve times twelve thousand who follow Him whithersoever He goeth.

We must not confound this company with the hundred and forty-four thousand mentioned in the seventh chapter, though in some respects they are similar. Those of the seventh chapter were sealed to secure them against coming judgments, God putting His mark upon them, that the executors of His righteous judgments might pass them over (Ps. xci. 7), and they are of all the tribes of the children of Israel, they are exclusively Israelites.

Here, in the fourteenth chapter, the hundred forty and four thousand have His Father's name written on their foreheads. That is, manifestly declared to be children of God, "known and read of all men;" and they are "redeemed from among men" (verse 4), not from Israel exclusively, but from mankind generally.

Verse 2. "And I heard a voice from heaven, as *the* voice of many waters, and as *the* voice of a great thunder; and I heard *the* voice of harpers harping with their harps."

The hundred forty and four thousand standing on the ground of sovereign grace, and having the presence of the Lord of Glory with them, are on earth, but the voice of melody which John hears comes from heaven. "The voice of many waters," that is, from the innumerable company of angels which surround the throne.

"The voice of a great thunder." That is, the voice of praise from the surrounding universe. The music of heaven's orchestra comes wafted down to earth, like the melody of a military band provided to animate the warriors in the conflict, and to urge them on to deeds of valour. It is God's own provision to cheer His faithful combatants in this last struggle against the combined powers of earth and hell.

"And I heard *the* voice of harpers harping with their harps."

Chapter xv. 2 explains to us who these harpers are. They are those who, having been faithful unto death, have gained the victory over the beast, and in heaven join their harpings with the harmony of the skies.

Verse 3. "And they sung, as it were, a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts [living ones] and the elders; and no man could learn *that* song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth."

The old song is the song of creation, which angels sang when God laid the foundations of the earth (Job xxxviii. 7). The new song is the song of redemption (see Ps. xcvi. 1, 2), "Sing unto Jehovah a new song . . . show forth His salvation from day to day." This new song is sung in the presence of God, and before the four living ones, symbolic of the Church, and before the four and twenty elders, which represent the saints of a former dispensation. In heaven

"The whole creation join in one,
To bless the sacred Name
Of Him who sits upon the throne,
And to adore the Lamb."

On earth only the redeemed from among men have fellowship with the heavenly harmony; none but these can learn and sing the song of salvation, which is sung around the throne.

Verses 4, 5. "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from *among* men, *being the* first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."

These are they, who, by faith and patience, inherit the promises, and, by these exceeding great and precious promises, become "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. i. 4).

Our Lord speaks of those who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake (Matt. xix. 12); and in Isa. lvi. 1-8, there is a wondrous and beautiful prophecy of these godly ones of the latter day, not only from among the children of Israel, but from the Gentiles, the strangers who join themselves with them, who keep God's commandments, and take hold of His covenant, and in whom the promises of the new covenant will be fulfilled. God will write His law in their

hearts, He will put a new spirit within them, and cause them to walk in His ways (Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27).

When on the one hand the transgressors are come to the full, and iniquity abounds such as it never did before, on the other hand the Spirit of Jehovah will lift up His standard, and work mightily in the hearts of the faithful. God's saints then will be refined, but not with silver, they are chosen in the furnace of affliction. As the three Hebrew youths passing through the furnace heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated, came forth with every bond burnt, these, as the result of the fiery trials through which they will pass, and the sanctifying afflictions which they have endured, will come forth pre-eminent in holiness, purity, and truth, to follow the Lamb whithersoever He leadeth. They will be the work of God's hands that He may be glorified, in whom God will show that He has not done in vain all that He hath done (Ezek. xiv. 22, 23).

These are redeemed from the earth and its defilement, "and from among men" and their iniquity; being a first-fruit unto God and to the Lamb, these will be a specimen beforehand of what all Israel will become under the new covenant in the Millennial kingdom, a holy nation, a peculiar people, and to these, when Israel is brought into the fulness of blessing, God will give in His house, and within His walls, a place and a name better than of sons and daughters, an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. For even them will He bring to His holy mountain, and make them joyful in His house of prayer (Isa. lvi. 4-7). These are Israelites indeed in whose spirit there is no guile (Zeph. iii. 13).

In the Book of Psalms we have the varied experience of these godly and tried ones in their onward progress through conviction, temptation, and conflict onward to their ultimate triumph, thanksgiving, and praise.

Verse 6. "And I saw another angel fly in *the* midst of heaven, having *the* everlasting gospel to preach *unto* them that dwell on the earth, and *to* every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

"Another angel." This angel follows the angel which had the seventh trumpet, who ushers in the great crisis of this world's history. Angels are the agents of God's providential actings on the earth, and are emblems of God's providential rule. This angel flying in mid-heaven is a sign, setting forth that God, by His providence, will open up in a remarkable manner, and above all barriers, human or earthly, a way for the universal spread of the Gospel.

As upon the persecution which arose about Stephen, they that were

scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word, so God will over-rule the persecution of the faithful remnant symbolised by the man child, and the remnant of the woman's seed, for the universal dissemination of the truth.

The everlasting gospel is the same old, old story, which is true from the beginning, redemption through the blood of the Lamb, the serpent's head crushed beneath the bruised heel of the woman's seed. As there is none other name under heaven given amongst men for salvation, so there is no other gospel but the gospel of the grace of God through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

When the energy of Satan is put forth to the full through his strong delusions, that men might believe his lie, the counteracting energy of the Spirit of God will be brought in to resist it, so that "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people," will have the gospel proclaimed to them. As the result of this world-wide diffusion of the gospel, the multitude which no man can number out of every nation will come forth, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, to wave their palms of victory and celebrate the triumphs of redeeming grace and love.

Verse 7. "Saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and *the* sea, and *the* fountains of waters.'"

The proclamation of grace will be accompanied by urgent admonition to fear God and give Him the glory, rather than fear Antichrist, or give the glory to Satan; for though this will be the time of Antichrist's triumph and Satan's power, it will also be the hour of God's judgment, for the Lord Jesus is about to be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel. Similar in effect to the words of the Lord Jesus: "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear Him" (Luke xii. 4, 5).

Instead of worshipping the beast, or his image, and receiving his mark on the forehead or in their hands, that they should worship the Creator of all things, the invisible things of whom are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made (Rom. i. 20). He will put down the worship of every strange god by His almighty power; for "*the* gods that have not made the heavens and *the* earth, *even* they shall perish from *the* earth, and from under these heavens" (Jer. x. 11).

Verse 8. "And there followed another angel, saying, 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen, *that* great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.'"

There is another form of evil to be guarded against—not only the denying of God, but the corruption of Christian truth, "the apostasy" or "falling away" mentioned in 2 Thess. ii. 3. Babylon is the emblem of apostate Christianity.

At the beginning of the seven years—the last week—Babylon will represent the outward form of Christianity from whence the genuine salt and light has been taken out by the removal of true believers. This is the apostasy. Babylon's FALL, here spoken of, is when, instead of being even professedly the bride of the true Christ, she becomes the harlot of Antichrist. Her final fall is her utter destruction by the united fury of the ten kingdoms of the beast.

Verses 9–11. "And *the* third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If any *man* worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in *the* presence of the holy angels, and in *the* presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.'"

A word of most solemn warning. The choice must now be made between God and Satan, between Christ and Antichrist, between the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error; and that choice, once made, is final and irrevocable, the results eternal and unalterable; the mark of the beast, once received, is the seal of eternal perdition. The righteous language of the godly on the earth will then be: "Be not merciful to any wicked transgressors" (Ps. lix. 5). "Do not I hate them, O Jehovah, that hate Thee? And am not I grieved with those that rise up against Thee? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them mine enemies" (Ps. cxxxix. 21, 22)—language only applicable in full to these times.

When man's transgressions shall have come to the full, the mingled cup of God's indignation will be full to overflowing. The result of the righteous judgment of God that will come upon these wicked transgressors, in whom God will show His wrath and His power to punish, will be an everlasting monument of the evil of sin, a beacon light of solemn import to all the universe and throughout eternity, for "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." The

"everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41) will be shared by Antichrist and his associates, for "Tophet *is* ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he *hath* made it deep *and* large; *the* pile thereof *is* fire and much wood; *the* breath of Jehovah, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it" (Isa. xxx. 33). The fire is the righteous judgment of God, the wood is the transgression and sin which furnish the fuel for the burning, and the breath of the indignation of Jehovah, like a stream of brimstone, gives intensity to the flame.

Verses 12, 13. "Here is *the* patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, 'Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in *the* Lord from henceforth.' 'Yea,' saith the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.'"

As in the case of the three Hebrew youths (Dan. iii. 19, 20) the furnace was heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be heated, so it will be in this time of the great tribulation: the trial to which faith and patience will be put, will be fiercer than any hitherto known. This fiery trial will make manifest, without a doubt, those who "keep the commandments of God," and who have "the faith of Jesus."

This voice from heaven, borne witness to by the Spirit of God, pronouncing a blessing on those who "loved not their lives unto *the* death," is a word of strong consolation which will be specially needed and welcome in those times.

"From henceforth" marks a definite period—from the commencement of these last three and a half years of unparalleled trial; for, while there is no rest for the wicked (ver. 11), there remaineth a rest for the people of God; and "verily *there is* a reward for the righteous: verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth" (Ps. lviii. 11).

Verses 14-16. "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto *the* Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, 'Thrust in Thy sickle and reap: for the time is come for Thee to reap: for the harvest of the earth is ripe [dried].' And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped."

"The harvest is the end of the age" (Matt. xiii. 39), and this harvest is twofold.

At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together

to Him, the wheat is gathered into His garner; but the tares left on the field, when fully dried, are cast into the fire (Matt. xiii.).

The scene before us is the HARVEST of the earth's ripened iniquity. Instead of the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven with His many diadems, and the sword, to receive His kingdom (Rev. xix.), He is here seen seated on a white cloud—the emblem of strict, impartial justice—and with the victor's crown and sickle, for it is the execution of righteous judgment on man's iniquity, fully ripe.

Our Lord refers to this in Mark iv. 26–29. The sower commits his seed to the earth, then goes to sleep, and lets the earth do her part, bringing “forth fruit of herself, first *the* blade, then *the* ear, after that *the* full corn in the ear.” So it is with good and evil: left to the responsibility of man, whether it is the good seed or the tares of the wicked one, it reaches maturity in due time. “But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.” When the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, He putteth in the sickle, and gathers the wheat into His garner, and, when iniquity is ripe or dried, He thrusts in His sickle on the earth. This is judgment on political and moral evil headed up in Antichrist, when lawlessness comes out in bold antagonism against God.

Verses 17–20. “And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, ~~he~~ also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, ‘Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.’ And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs.”

This is the VINTAGE of the earth, the judgment of God executed on religious evil, headed up in Babylon the Great: apostasy fully consummated.

The angel (the emblem of God's providential agency) having the sharp sickle is symbolic of the fact that God in His providence will employ the agency of man for the accomplishment of His purposes (chap. xvii. 16, 17). The ten kings in their hatred and wrath cast the vine into the winepress.

In point of time the vintage precedes the harvest; that is, the judgment of Babylon precedes the judgment of Antichrist; but the judgment

of Babylon will be finally consummated by the Son of Man at His appearing, for He it is that treads the winepress (chap. xix. 15), when not only the beast, but the false prophet, come under the wrath of God to the uttermost" (chap. xix. 20).

The judgment will be deep, in accordance with the enormity of the evil, and co-extensive with the spread of false religion.

CHAPTER XV.

Verses 1. "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having *the* seven last plagues; for in them is filled up [completed] the wrath of God."

The seven trumpets were, as we have seen, emblematic of the partial and premonitory judgments of God on the earth, during the first three and a half years of Daniel's seventieth week of years.

The seven vials are symbolic of the execution of the fulness of Divine indignation during the last three and a half years.

Before entering on these solemn scenes of judgment on earth we have a beautiful vision of heavenly triumph and praise.

Verses 2-4. "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast [wild beast], and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses, *the* servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying 'Great and marvellous *are* Thy works, Lord [Jehovah] God Almighty; just and true *are* Thy ways, *Thou* King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord [Jehovah], and glorify Thy name? for *Thou* only *art* holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest.'"

In connection with the Tabernacle in the Wilderness was the brazen laver supplied with water from the smitten rock, and on the south side of the Temple of Solomon stood the brazen sea. In both of these provision was made for cleansing, because it was forbidden for the priests to compass the altar, or enter the sanctuary, 'with defiled' hands or feet.

In chap. iv. 6 we read of "the sea of glass like unto crystal," before the throne of God,—not a provision for cleansing, for all fear of

defilement has passed away for ever, but an emblem of the fixed purity which characterises the worship and service of God above.

In this fifteenth chapter it is a sea of glass mingled with fire—emblematic not only of purity, but of that fiery trial through which those standing on the sea of glass had passed. In the latter part of chap. vii. those who have come out of the great tribulation are seen with robes made white in the blood of the Lamb, and with palms of victory in their hands, and with their song of praise. Here those who, like them, have passed through that fiery trial, are seen having the harps of God, and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. They praise God not only for their own salvation, but for His righteous judgments, and in prospect of His kingdom and His glory. The echoes of this song are heard and responded to on earth by those who are still in the furnace and passing through the fire, as we have already seen in chap. xiv. 1-3: “And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him a hundred forty *and* four thousand, having His Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as *the* voice of many waters, and as *the* voice of a great thunder: and I heard *the* voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts [living ones], and the elders: and no man could learn *that* song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.”

Verses 5, 6. “And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple [inner temple] of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: and the seven angels came out of the temple [inner temple], having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having *their* breasts girded with golden girdles.”

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men (Rom. i. 18). He also sends help for His faithful ones from the sanctuary (Ps. xx. 2). These judgments have not only their origin in the sovereignty of God as proceeding from the throne (chap. iv. 2), but from the holiness of God—for they proceed from the sanctuary—and also from the faithfulness of God in fulfilment of His word, for they proceed from the tabernacle of witness.

The seven angels emblematic of God’s providential agency come forth from the sanctuary. Their clothing of pure and bright linen is expressive of their holiness and glory; the girded loins is the emblem of strength; but the breasts, the seat of the affections, girded with golden girdles, is suggestive of holy indignation, in fellowship with God—a zeal for the vindication of His holiness.

Verses 7, 8. "And one of the four beasts [living ones] gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials [bowls] full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple [inner temple] was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."

The redeemed in resurrection and heavenly glory have fellowship with God in the execution of His righteous judgments, as well as the holy angels who surround the throne. One of the four living ones gives the vials full of the wrath of God into the hands of the angels who are the executors of it.

The temple filled with smoke reminds us of the scene in Isa. vi. 4. Its solemn import is expressed in Ps. lxxvi. 7-9: "Thou, *even* Thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in Thy sight when once Thou art angry? Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; *the* earth feared, and was still, when God arose to judgment, to save all *the* meek of the earth. Selah."

CHAPTER XVI.

Verse 1. "And I heard a great voice out of the temple [inner temple] saying to the seven angels, 'Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.'"

The word of command comes from the inner temple or sanctuary of God, for these judgments are in vindication of Divine holiness and truth.

The seven seals of chap. vi. occupy the whole of the last or seventieth weeks of Daniel's weeks of years—the trumpets the first half week or three and a half years, and the vials (or, more properly, bowls) the last three and a half years, the time of the great tribulation.

Verse 2. "And the first went, and poured out his vial [bowl] upon the EARTH; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast [wild beast] and upon them which worshipped his image."

There is a remarkable similarity between these seven last plagues

and the plagues of Egypt. Compare Ex. ix. 8-11—the plague of boils.

The plagues of Egypt were literal; these are probably symbols of God's dealings in righteous judgment with man on the earth, combined with literal interpretation and prediction. The adherents and worshippers of the beast are the first subjects of these judgments.

Verse 3. “And the second angel poured out his vial [bowl] upon the SEA; and it became as the blood of a dead *man*: and every living soul died in the sea.”

The first vial may 'be symbolic of moral and spiritual disease; under the second vial it goes further; there is moral and spiritual death—death in the soul.

Verses 4-7. “And the third angel poured out his vial [bowl] upon [into] the RIVERS and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, ‘Thou art righteous, O Jehovah, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus. For they *have* shed *the* blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.’” And I heard another out of the altar say, ‘Even so, Lord [Jehovah] God Almighty, true and righteous *are* Thy judgments.’”

The springs of life corrupted at the fountain head; also the bloodthirsty satiated with blood, as in the times of the French Revolution.

The angelic agents employed in the providential dealings of God with man adore the righteousness and truth manifested in His judgments.

Compare Ex. vii. 17-21—the waters turned into blood.

Verses 8, 9. “And the fourth angel poured out his vial [bowl] upon the SUN: and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power [authority] over these plagues: and they repented not to give Him glory.”

The language employed in reference to those who have come out of these scenes of great tribulation, in chap. vii. 16, would seem to imply that this plague may be understood as literal: “Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.” And in striking contrast with the blasphemy of the wicked on earth is the song of triumph and praise sung by the redeemed before the throne above.

Verses 10, 11. "And the fifth angel poured out his vial [bowl] upon the SEAT [throne] OF THE BEAST [wild beast]; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."

Compare Ex. x. 21-23—the plague of darkness. But notice the alleviation to the people of God: "All *the* children of Israel had light in their dwellings."

Verses 12-16. "And the sixth angel poured out his vial [bowl] upon the great river EUFRATES; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of [from] *the* east [sun-rising] might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast [wild beast], and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are *the* spirits of devils [demons], working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world [habitable world], to gather them to *the* battle of that great day of God Almighty. ('Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.') And he gathered them together into *a* place called in *the* Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

Compare chapter ix. 13-15. Under the sixth trumpet the four angels bound in the great river Euphrates were loosed, prepared for a limited period and for partial judgment. Under the sixth vial preparation is made for the last great conflict.

Compare also Ex. viii. 1-7. When Jehovah smote the land of Egypt with the plague of frogs, "the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon *the* land of Egypt." These miracles of Satanic power will be repeated in the last days, not, however, in the annoying but harmless form of natural frogs, but for the widespread propagation of delusive error; "for they are *the* spirits of devils [demons], working miracles [signs], *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole habitable world."

"Out of the mouth of the dragon"—doctrines of Satanic subtilty, replete with supernatural infatuation.

"Out of the mouth of the wild beast;" for to him will be given "a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies" (chap. xiii. 5).

"Out of the mouth of the false prophet"—the combined sophistries of scepticism, infidelity, atheism, and science falsely so called, finding their way, like the frogs of Egypt, both into the chambers of kings and

into the dwellings of the poor. This is Satan's muster-call for the battle of the great day.

Here comes in a parenthesis—the Son of Man reminding His faithful followers in these dark days that His coming is nigh at hand; and this announcement is given, not only to encourage their hearts, but that they may be found watching and ready.

This is perfectly distinct from the words of the Lord Jesus to the Church, "Behold, I come quickly," as we are distinctly told in 1 Thess. v. 4: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that *that* day should overtake you as a thief." Yet it is equally true that to those who refuse to watch His coming will be as unexpected as that of a thief (Rev. iii. 3). In this solemn crisis of the world's history, when all things are preparing for the final and decisive conflict, the soldiers of the Cross will need a special sustainment and a special comfort; they will need not only to take the shield of faith, but for a helmet the hope of salvation.

Armageddon signifies "*the* mountain of a great multitude," or "*the* mountain of slaughter."

Verses 17–21. "And the seventh angel poured out his vial [bowl] into the AIR; and there came a great voice out of [from] the temple [inner temple] of heaven, from the throne, saying, 'It is done.' And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nation fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. And every island fled *away*, and *the* mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every* stone about *the* weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great."

The seventh vial brings in the great crisis of this world's history, preparatory to the establishment of the dominion of God on the earth, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ.

The language employed in connection with the great earthquake here spoken of is worthy of note—"such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great"—implying that greater convulsions might have been previously, as the discoveries of geology would seem to attest. Ps. xlv. 2 beautifully expresses the

confidence and triumph of those who fear God, in the midst of these scenes of overwhelming commotion. "Therefore will not we fear, though *the* earth be removed, and though *the* mountains be carried into the midst of *the* sea; though *the* waters thereof roar and be troubled, though *the* mountains shake with *the* swelling thereof."

The storm of hail reminds us of Ex. ix. 18-33—the plague of hail in the land of Egypt; also of Job xxxviii. 22, 23, and of Isa. xxviii. 17-20.

It is at this period that great Babylon comes in for a share of the judgment as described in chap. xviii., inflicted through the instrumentality of the ten kings who hate her, and make her desolate.

CHAPTER XVII.

Verses 1, 2. "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials [bowls], and talked with me, saying unto me, 'Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth *have* committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.'"

Compare chap. xxi. 9: "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials [bowls] full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, 'Come hither; I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.'"

We have here the contrast shown between the true, faithful, spiritual Church, the bride of the Lamb, and the false, carnal, and apostate system, the harlot companion of the beast: the beauty, glory, and eternal blessedness of the one, and the true character and final judgment of the other.

One great advantage of the study of the Book of Revelation is, that it shows us the final form and full development of principles, slow in their progress, and insidious in their operation; and God's judgment and retribution upon them.

We are apt to consider present appearances and present advantages, but it is well to know and ponder the issues and the end.

Chapters xvii. and xviii. give us not only the full development, but the final judgment, of Babylon the Great.

According to 2 Cor. xi. 2, the Church is represented as espoused to one husband, to be presented as a chaste virgin to Christ. She early lost her first love, and was corrupted from her simplicity; but Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it. He is now sanctifying and cleansing it with the washing of water by the word, and will ultimately present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing (Eph. v. 26, 27).

Before the coming of the day of Jehovah, when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven, taking vengeance, two things are predicted—the apostasy of the professing Church, and the manifestation of the wicked or lawless one (2 Thess. ii. 8, 9).

So long as the Holy Ghost the Comforter remains with the Church on earth, this apostasy is prevented, and the manifestation of the lawless one is hindered (2 Thess. ii. 7); but when true believers in whom the Spirit of God dwells—the living and remaining ones—are caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17), the outward shell of professing Christianity will be left on the earth, having indeed the form of godliness, but destitute of its living power.

The purport of this chapter, and the signs of our times, seem to indicate that the outward form of Christianity during the first three years and a half of Antichrist's reign will be Babylonish in its character, glorious in its worldly splendour; but the great apostasy or utter fall from the Church's first position will take place at the commencement of the last three years and a half. At this period, Antichrist having set himself up as God in the temple of God, and utterly denied both the Father and the Son, that worldly system which hitherto had borne the outward name and profession of Christianity will deny its allegiance to Christ and become the harlot of the beast. This is the great apostasy, and this is the great whore.

Her sitting upon many waters, as explained in verse 15, indicates the widespread prevalence of her influence and power.

In the Old Testament Israel is figuratively represented as the wife of Jehovah, and Israel's connection with idolatry was regarded as spiritual adultery. In the New Testament the Church is represented as espoused unto Christ. The prostitution of Christianity to secular ends, and the Church's allegiance rendered to any other authority than that of Christ, is spiritual fornication. The union of the carnal and the spiritual, the human with the Divine, the earthly and the heavenly,—the combination of that which is attractive and fascinating to the carnal mind, appealing to the senses and passions of the natural heart, with that which is spiritual and of Divine origin, the false with the true, the truth which is of God combined with the delusion which cometh from the evil one—this is the wine of Babylon's fornication.

Verse 3. "So he carried me away in *the* Spirit into *the* wilderness : and I saw a woman sit [sitting] upon a scarlet coloured beast [wild beast], full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns."

Compare this with chap. xxi. 10 : "And he carried me away in *the* Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me *that* great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." When the Spirit of God would show the true Church in her future excellency, He leads the soul upward to contemplate her in her heavenly and Divine glory ; but when He would exhibit that which falsely professes the name of Christ in her ultimate future, it is "into the wilderness" — a scene of spiritual destitution.

The woman represents apostate Christianity. The "scarlet coloured beast" is emblematic of the Roman Empire in its final form ; scarlet being the emblem of earthly royal authority and dignity. "Full of names of blasphemy ;" for he that is at the head of the empire blasphemes the God of heaven, and those that compose his kingdom worship him, and the dragon who gives him his power (chap. xiii. 4-8).

The seven heads and ten horns are more fully described hereafter.

Verse 4. "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked [gilded] with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication."

Scarlet is the emblem of human and earthly dignity ; purple, the combination of scarlet and blue, is emblematic of authority which unites the heavenly and spiritual with that which is earthly and carnal. False doctrine is for the most part a corruption of Divine truth—error overlaid with a thin layer of truth, like base metal gilded.

The "precious stones and pearls" are emblematic of spiritual truths, and of those wondrous revelations of the Church's position and prospects made known in the sacred Scriptures, but corrupted by the false apostate system.

The cup which she holds in her hand is of gold, which is the emblem of that which is Divine, for the false Church will possess and use for her own purposes those ordinances which are of Divine origin—baptism, the Lord's Supper, ministry, and worship ; all these she employs, but not for the communication of spiritual and Divine truth and blessing, but prostituted to the basest of purposes, and used to the diffusion of the most pernicious doctrines.

Verse 5. "And upon her forehead *was* a name written, 'Mystery,

Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.’”

The Babylon of the prophecies is the literal city; the Babylon of the Revelation is symbolic. There is a mystery, a depth of hidden meaning here, presented in a symbolic aspect.

The Babylon of these chapters represents to us the corruption of Christianity, not only in its progress, but in its final form. She is “the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.” Those evils which have characterised the different forms of corrupt ecclesiastical systems, from the commencement of the Christian dispensation, are traced up to her, in whom all are embodied and will be carried out to the full. The daughters have long appeared on the stage, and we are familiar with many of them, but the mother has not yet come forth.

Verse 6. “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs [witnesses] of Jesus.”

From the beginning false ecclesiastical systems have been intolerant and persecuting in proportion to their possession of power. During the first three years and a half of Antichrist’s reign he will be occupied with the establishment of his empire—he appears to tolerate all religions; but during the last three years and a half, or time of the great tribulation, when he puts to death all who will not submit to his blasphemous assumptions, Babylon the Great will be his most efficient ally; possessing almost unlimited power, her bloodthirstiness will then be satiated to the full.

“And when I saw her, I wondered *with* great admiration [wonder].”

Verse 7. “And the angel said unto me, ‘Wherefore didst thou marvel [wonder]? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast [wild beast] that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.’”

When religion assumes a form of external worldly splendour, there is much that is fascinating to the natural mind. What is needed to counteract its enticement is the knowledge or discovery of the mystery of iniquity—the depths of depravity which are hidden beneath this attractive yet delusive exterior; the true principles of the system, whether ecclesiastical or political, which lie at the foundation.

Verse 8. “‘The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall [is about to] ascend out of the bottomless pit [abyss], and

go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written [have not been written] in [on] the book of life from *the* foundation of *the* world, when they behold the beast [wild beast] that was, and is not, and yet is."

The wild beast is the Roman Empire in its last form. There was a time when, in the estimate of God, it assumed the same character as it will at the close. This, probably, was the case for a brief period, when Satan, having entered into Judas Iscariot, combined the Romish, Jewish, priestly, and democratic powers against the Son of God, and crucified the Lord of glory. This, according to Acts iv. 25-28, was the first fulfilment of Ps. ii. 1-3, but there will be a future accomplishment in the last days.

The beast that John saw in vision as to its essential characteristics had its existence for a brief period at the time of the crucifixion, yet at the time that John wrote it was "not"—it did not then exist in this character—but in the last days it "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition;" that is, Satan will enter into Antichrist as he entered into Judas, and the end will be swift perdition.

Such will be the magnificence and power of the empire that it will be the subject of world-wide astonishment, except on the part of those who, being predestinated unto eternal life, have the teaching of God's Holy Spirit, enabling them to discover its real, Satanic, and evil character.

Though the beast has not yet been manifested in its final form, yet in the estimate of God all its essential principles are in existence, for Satan is even now the god of this world; thus it is "the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

Verses 9, 10. "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And *there* are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space."

These "seven heads" or "mountains" may be taken to represent seven established forms of governmental power, headed up in one individual, as for example—

First, the Babylonian Empire, headed up in Nebuchadnezzar—the gold.

Second, the Medeo-Persian in Darius—silver.

Third, the Grecian in Alexander—brass.

Fourth, the Roman under the Cæsars—iron.

Fifth, imperial and republican combined—iron mixed with miry clay

Sixth, that form which existed when John wrote.

Seventh, the empire under Antichrist during the first three years and a half, combining the various forms of government—the perfection of human wisdom in the science of rule. See chap. xiii. 2, and Dan. ii. 45.

Verse 11. “‘And the beast [wild beast] that was, and is not, even *he* is *the* eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.’”

During the last three years and a half of Antichrist's reign, the kingdom will assume its eighth and final form. Then authority will no longer be from God, coming down from above, for the punishment of evildoers and the reward of them that do well; nor even human authority proceeding from the people for the establishment and fulfilment of human will. It will be Satanic and infernal, arising from the bottomless pit, for the dragon will give the beast “his power, and his throne, and great authority;” and all this for the repression of good and the encouragement of evil. When things have assumed this form, then the righteous judgment of God will be near at hand, and the retribution will be fearful and full.

Verse 12. “‘And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which *have* received no kingdom as yet; but receive power [authority] as kings one hour with the beast [wild beast].’”

The empire of the wild beast in its last form will consist of ten kingdoms under ten kings, corresponding with the feet and toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image—partly monarchical and partly democratic, represented by iron mixed with miry clay (Dan. ii. 41–43).

Verse 13. “‘These have one mind [*or* purpose], and shall give [deliver up] their power and strength [authority] unto the beast [wild beast].’”

These ten kings in purpose and in politics are united, and together accept the headship of the Antichrist, represented by the little horn in Daniel's prophecy (vii. 8, 20–24).

Verse 14. “‘These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful.’”

See chap. xix. 19–21.

When the Son of Man comes to establish His kingdom, He first executes judgment on those that oppose Him, taking out of His kingdom all things which offend, and them that do iniquity (Matt. xiii. 41).

Verses 15-17. "And he saith unto me, 'The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God *hath* put in their hearts to fulfil His will [mind, *or* purpose], and to agree [to make one mind], and give their kingdom unto the beast [wild beast], until the words of God shall be fulfilled.'"

The false religious system represented by Babylon will obtain extensive popularity and widespread influence. The empire of the beast will be overthrown by the Son of Man Himself at His appearing; but previous to this, great Babylon will come to her end, through the united hostility of the ten kings against her, headed by Antichrist himself, to whom they give their power. So long as superstition, upheld by outward grandeur and priestly assumption, bears sway over the popular mind, there may be outward tranquillity; but when the hollowness of superstition is discovered, and the base and infernal wickedness of this false ecclesiastical system is found out, the natural heart and mind revolts against the whole imposition with uncontrollable disgust and fury. The buildings will be demolished, the vestments desecrated, those seeking to uphold her will be killed, and the pomp and glory given to the devouring flame.

Thus God will employ human agency for the performance of His will and the fulfilment of His word.

Verse 18. "'And the woman which thou sawest is *that* great city, which reigneth [hath a kingdom] over the kings of the earth.'"

When John wrote, pagan, imperial Rome was the mistress of the world. In subsequent ages, papal Rome has sought to assume and maintain this position, and not without success; to this end her energies have been, and still are, perseveringly and unscrupulously applied, and the signs of the times appear to indicate a prospect of success in the future to her ambitious designs greater than any before attained.

The metropolis of the empire of the beast may be in some future, literal Babylon, to be erected with Babel speed in the land of Shinar, where the ancient prophecies may find their full accomplishment; but Rome appears to be the city identified with mystic Babylon.

Mystic Babylon, the harlot associate of the beast, represents apostate Christianity in its final form under the combined emblems of a woman and a city; just as the true Church, the bride of the Lamb,

is shown in chaps. xxi. and xxii. as the holy city, new Jerusalem, where many of the figures employed are taken from ancient Jerusalem, and from the Jerusalem of the Millennial age. See Isa. lx.

So, also, the language applied to mystic Babylon corresponds with the prophecies concerning ancient Babylon, and to the historic facts of papal Rome.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Verses 1, 2. "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power [authority]; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, 'Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen, and is become *the* habitation of devils [demons], and *the* hold [ward] of every foul spirit, and a cage [ward] of every unclean and hateful bird.'"

The time of this vision of the mighty angel is the beginning of the last three and a half years of Antichrist's reign, when Satan and his angels having been cast out of the heavenlies, and Antichrist having become the incarnation of the evil one, setting himself up as God in the temple of God, will claim the homage and worship of the world.

At this time what course will that false ecclesiastical system take which hitherto has professed to be the Church of God and the associate of His Christ? Will she be true to her original profession? or will she take a position totally the reverse? This vision supplies the answer. She will become the harlot associate of the beast, and instead of being what she had hitherto professed to be—"the habitation of God through the Spirit"—will "become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." The birds of the air, or spirits of wickedness, will no longer merely lodge in the branches of the great mustard tree, but the whole system will become their habitation and home. This is the great apostasy, this is Babylon's ignominious fall.

Verse 3. "'For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth *have* committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth *are* waxed rich through the abundance [power] of her delicacies [luxury].'"

Spiritual fornication is the combination of that which is Divine,

heavenly, spiritual, and holy, with that which is Satanic, earthly, carnal and false.

That which has led on to this solemn issue has been an unholy alliance with the world, for the friendship of this world is enmity with God, the outward form of religion having been assumed as a cloak of covetousness, places of dignity and authority employed for the acquisition of wealth, and the souls of men made merchandise of.

Verses 4, 5. "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, 'Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins *have* reached unto heaven, and God *hath* remembered her iniquities.'"

It would appear that up to this period some even of God's people had lingered in the communion of this corrupt system—such is the fascination of outward pomp in matters of religion—but now the command for separation is imperative. Happy they who, through Scriptural intelligence of mystic Babylon's real character and final fall, even now shun all association and joint participation with her. When her iniquities have reached their full height, vengeance will be executed, and former iniquities will not be forgotten.

Verses 6-8. "'Reward her [render to her] even as she rewarded [rendered to] you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she *hath* filled [mixed] fill [mix] to her double. How much she *hath* glorified herself, and lived deliciously [luxuriously], so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, 'I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.'" Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong *is* Jehovah God who judgeth her.'"

After that the Lord Jesus has come and received His people to Himself, all that which hitherto has borne the character of Christianity, and professed to be a part of the Church of Christ on the earth, but destitute of spiritual life, reality, and power, will still continue in outward form and manifestation.

Every mere system, of whatever name or denomination, uniting in one, will then constitute that outwardly prosperous and universal ecclesiastical system symbolised by Babylon the Great. Year by year increasing in influence and splendour, she will at length attain the zenith of popularity and power; but at the very time when she will appear to have reached entire security, sudden overthrow will come

upon her through the ten kings, and that destruction will be full and final, for from that hour nothing of a similar character will be known on the earth, and according to the measure of Babylon's pomp and arrogance will be her degradation and her ruin.

Verses 9, 10. "And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously [luxuriously] with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they *shall* see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, "Alas, alas *that* great city Babylon, *that* mighty city ! for in one hour is thy judgment come."'"

The overthrow of mystic Babylon will be by the combined action of the ten kings composing the empire of the beast. The other kings of the earth will lament over the ruin they were unable to avert. So intimate will be the connection of the corrupt system and the reigning powers that her sudden destruction will be a shock to thrones and states.

Verses 11-19. "And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her ; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more : *the* merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet ; and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble ; and cinnamon, and odours [incense], and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves [bodies], and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after *are* departed from thee, and all things which *were* dainty and goodly *are* departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, "Alas, alas *that* great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked [gilded] with gold, and precious stones, and pearls ! for in one hour so great riches is come to nought." And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, "What *city* is like unto *this* great city !" And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, "Alas, alas *that* great city, wherein were made rich all that

had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness ! for in one hour is she made desolate.” ” ”

Such will be the outward pomp and splendour of mystic Babylon, so costly her vestments, so elaborate her ritual, so grand her buildings, so gorgeous her palaces, so vast the number of those employed and enriched by her, that her sudden ruin will affect the interests of the entire mercantile world ; the shock will be felt on every exchange throughout the civilised earth.

Verse 20. “ ‘ Rejoice over her, *thou* heaven, and *ye* holy apostles and prophets ; for God *hath* avenged you on her.’ ”

The response to this call will be found in chap. xix. 1-4, where the innumerable multitude who come out of the great tribulation, together with the saints of the former dispensation, and the church of the first-born, all unite in giving God the glory for the judgment executed.

Verses 21-23. “ And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast *it* into the sea, saying, ‘ Thus with violence shall *that* great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And *the* voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee ; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft *he be*, shall be found any more [at all] in thee ; and *the* sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee ; and *the* light of a candle [lamp] shall shine no more at all in thee ; and *the* voice of *the* bridegroom and of *the* bride shall be heard no more at all in thee : for thy merchants were the great men of the earth ; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.’ ”

When mystic Babylon falls, it will not be reformation nor reconstruction : her ruin will be complete ; from henceforth nothing of a like character will have any existence.

The instructions given by Jeremiah to Seraiah the prince, recorded in Jer. li. 63, 64, are somewhat similar. There the stone was bound to the book of the prophecy, and cast into the Euphrates, to signify the fulfilment of the word on literal Babylon ; here the angel casts the great stone into the sea, expressive of mystic Babylon’s violent and utter overthrow.

No longer will the refinements of musical art be employed in her ritual, nor artistic skill be pressed into her service ; no candle or lamp will shine on her altars, nor ceremonies be performed at them ; her fascinations will have passed away for ever.

Verse 24. “‘And in her was found *the* blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.’”

To the principle of religious intolerance, exemplified fully in mystic Babylon, is attributed the persecutions for conscience sake which have for ages stained the world with blood, beginning with righteous Abel, the first martyr. For in this case he who worshipped God in the simplicity of faith was slain by the inventor and originator of will-worship.

CHAPTER XIX.

Verses 1-3. “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people [a great multitude] in heaven, saying, ‘Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto Jehovah our God: for true and righteous *are* His judgments: for He *hath* judged the great whore, which did corrupt [was corrupting] the earth with her fornication, and *hath* avenged the blood of His servants at her hand.’ And again they said, ‘Alleluia.’ And her smoke rose up [riseth up] for ever and ever.”

This outburst of praise evidently comes from the unnumbered multitude before the throne who have come out of the great tribulation. They ascribe deliverance and the glory to Jehovah, extolling Him by His name Jah, the title expressive of His eternal being (Ps. lxxviii. 4); for *Hallelujah* in the Hebrew signifies “Praise ye Jah.” They had witnessed the corruptions of the apostate ecclesiastical system, and probably experienced her persecuting power.

The judgment executed upon Babylon by the instrumentality of the ten kings had not exhausted the wrath of God towards her: there remains the undying worm, and the fire that never shall be quenched.

Verse 4. “And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts [living ones] fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, ‘Amen; Alleluia.’”

The saints of the former dispensation represented by the four and twenty elders, and those composing the church of the firstborn symbolised by the four living ones, in the spirit of adoring worship and in the recognition of the sovereignty of Him who sat on the throne, join their assent, and unite with the innumerable multitude in giving the glory and praise to Jehovah.

Verse 5. "And a voice came [came forth] out of the throne, saying, 'Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great.'"

This voice evidently comes forth from the Lamb of God, the heavenly Bridegroom, calling for a burst of universal praise to God, on behalf of Himself and of His blood-bought bride. In chap. v. 6 John writes: "And I beheld, and, lo, in *the* midst of the throne and of the four living ones, and in *the* midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes."

"Praise our God." This reminds us of the language of Christ when about to enter the holiest of all, recorded in John xx. 17: "Touch Me not; for I am not [have not] yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and *to* My God, and your God." For the Church is one with Himself, being members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, and therefore in closest relationship with His Father and His God. Hence, in chap. iv. 6, the Church is emblematically represented by the four living ones "in *the* midst of the throne" as well as "round about the throne," being one Spirit with their risen Lord.

"All ye His servants"—the innumerable company of angels; as in Ps. ciii. 20: "Bless Jehovah, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto *the* voice of His word."

"And ye that fear Him, both small and great"—that is—every creature of God "in all places of His dominion;" corresponding with Ps. ciii. 21: "Bless ye Jehovah, all *ye* His hosts; *ye* ministers of His, that do His pleasure."

Verses 6, 7. "And I heard as it were *the* voice of a great multitude, and as *the* voice of many waters, and as *the* voice of mighty thunderings, saying, 'Alleluia; for Jehovah God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour [glory] to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife *hath* made herself ready.'"

There are here three distinct companies—First, the white-robed, palm-bearing multitude before the throne, who have come out of the great tribulation, who commence the theme; secondly, the innumerable company of angels in general assembly, who swell the strain, as the voice of many waters; and thirdly, from the other inhabitants of the universe the echo comes back as mighty thunderings pealing from the illimitable regions of space. This is the grand hallelujah chorus of the skies, and the occasion is the marriage of the Lamb. But before the joy accompanying the marriage, the highest glory is to be given to

God—"Jehovah God omnipotent"—with whose kingdom and glory this event is intimately connected. God hath made known to us the mystery of His will, "*that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might head up all things in Christ, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven (Eph. i. 10).*" But He who raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, gave Him *to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all*" (Eph. i. 22, 23). This is the great mystery of Christ and the Church, the second Adam associated with the second Eve (Eph. v. 30-32).

We are here come to the period symbolised by the opening of the seventh seal. The sixth seal had brought us to the signs immediately preceding the manifestation of the Son of Man. In the interval between the destruction of Babylon by the ten kings, and the manifestation of the Son of Man as the rider on the white horse to take His kingdom and to reign, comes in the marriage of the Lamb, so that when He appears it is as the "Bridegroom coming out of His chamber" (Ps. xix. 5), and "*out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made Him glad*" (Ps. xlv. 8), in that day of His espousals or marriage, and in *the day of the gladness of His heart*, spoken of in Song of Solomon iii. 11. We have no description given of what the seventh seal unfolded, probably because the scene presented was such as no symbols could portray; but the seventh seal being opened, we read, "*there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour*" (Rev. viii. 1), as though all heaven were taken by surprise, and in solemn silence wonder and adore. Chapter xix. supplies us with the information of what the seventh seal presented. It is the marriage of the Lamb, and the subsequent appearing of Messiah in glory.

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him."

This is the response to the call from Him who is in the midst of the throne for universal praise—from all, "*both small and great.*" But why this universal joy? Because all creation is interested in the event celebrated. Through the blood of the Lamb all creation has been reconciled (Col. i. 20), and in the second Adam all things, not only on earth, but in heaven, have been headed up (Eph. i. 10), and thus secured from failure and from fall.

In incarnation the Creator stooped to the creature—God was manifest in flesh; but in life Immanuel abode alone: "*Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone*" (John xii. 24). Then, having made peace through the blood of His cross, God raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand on high. In resurrection the man Christ Jesus is taken up into glory. By the

Holy Ghost sent down at Pentecost the link is formed between the ascended, glorified Christ and His body the Church, and thus the Church becomes "the fulness [the filling up *or* complement] of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 23). Thus link by link—by incarnation, atonement, resurrection, and the Pentecostal Spirit—the union is effected between the Creator and the creature, and at the marriage of the Lamb the union will be consummated and perfected for ever.

Thus, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, when the history of this present world is finished, God, having headed up all creation in the second Adam, associated with His bride, all things will become new: "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things *will have* passed away" (Rev. xxi. 4); and God will have all the glory. He laid the plan deep in the counsels of eternity; He sent His only begotten Son into the world, a sacrifice for sin; He raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory; He sent down the Comforter; and the Church, the bride of the Lamb, is the Father's gift to His beloved Son, and He it is who heads up all in Christ, and thus secures the universe from failure, and for Himself the everlasting praise.

"THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB is come."

Beautiful and striking are the foreshadowings of this great event. To begin with, Adam and Eve in Paradise, which we know is a figure of the great mystery, Christ and the Church (Eph. v. 32). Adam, placed at the head of this lower creation, has a helpmeet provided for him by God: after his deep sleep (emblematic of the death of Christ), the rib taken from his side and woman formed; so, after Calvary, comes Pentecost, when, by the indwelling Spirit, the Church is formed as the body and the bride of Christ.

A second foreshadowing of the bride is to be found in Gen. xxiv. in Rebekah. Isaac, the obedient son, having been offered up, and received back in figure from the dead, Eliezer (typical of the Holy Ghost) is sent to provide for him a bride, and, having won the heart of Rebekah, brings her to Isaac.

Third, Joseph, having been sold by his brethren into the hands of the Gentiles and imprisoned, is exalted to the right hand of glory and of power, and the king gives him Asenath as his bride.

Fourth, Moses, having been rejected by the people of Israel—who failed to recognise in him God's deliverer—whilst in the far-off land, receives Zipporah for a wife.

The fifth type we find in Boaz and Ruth. Ruth, the Moabitess, becomes the wife of Boaz, the mighty man of wealth, the kinsman redeemer.

Sixth, Solomon takes to wife the king of Egypt's daughter, and, having built a house for his God and a house for the kingdom, builds also a house for her. This Gentile wife associated with Solomon in his kingdom is a beautiful foreshadowing of the Church as connected with a risen and glorified Christ; and this furnishes the theme for that most exquisite portion of Scripture, the Song of Songs.

"The marriage of the Lamb is come."

Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it. He is now sanctifying *and* cleansing it by the washing of water by *the* word, in order that He might present it to Himself *a* glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish (Eph. v. 25-27). This is the scene which is now before us; the marriage of the Lamb is come. He now presents her before the presence of the glory with exceeding joy, henceforth and for ever to be recognised by the whole universe as the bride, the Lamb's wife. Now will come the answer to His prayer in John xvii. 24: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before *the* foundation of *the* world."

"And His wife *hath* made herself ready."

A threefold work was necessary to prepare the Church for the marriage of the Lamb as His bride, and for her eternal relationship to Him as His wife. First, she had been redeemed unto God by His blood; secondly, sanctified by the Spirit; but thirdly, there was needed also that she should make herself ready.

She had already been raised and conformed to the image of her Lord in the glory, and seen Him as He is at the first resurrection. She had stood at His judgment seat, where everything had been tested in the light of God and the secrets of all hearts made manifest. And, since then, having been seven years in the presence of God in the full light of His countenance, and in the fellowship of the Lamb as one with Him who is in the midst of the throne, and in the communion of the Holy Ghost, symbolised by the seven lamps of fire that burn before the throne. Seven years in the company of the saints of the former dispensation, typified by the four and twenty elders, and in mutual intercourse together as the members of the body of Christ, as shown by the symbol of the four living ones. Seven years with the innumerable company of angels which surround the throne, and a portion of that time with the great multitude who come out of the great tribulation, conversant with the scenes that have been taking place on earth during the interval between her Lord coming to receive

her unto Himself and her manifestation with Him ;—profiting by all, she has made herself ready ; she is now prepared as she never was before, or could have been, to enter into the thoughts, the feelings, and the actions of her heavenly Bridegroom.

Verse 8. “And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white [bright] : for the fine linen is the righteousness [righteousnesses] of saints.”

Their robes have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, and not only is every iniquity forgiven, and every sin purged, but every service rendered, every sacrifice made, every victory gained, is kept in everlasting remembrance ; for the bride is given to appear in that pure and bright raiment which is emblematic of the righteousnesses of the saints—not righteousness in the singular, as characteristic of the whole, but righteousnesses in the plural, as indicating the recognition of each and every particular.

Verse 9. “And he saith unto me, ‘Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.’”

Compare with Ps. xlv. 13–15 : “*The king’s daughter is all glorious within ; her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework ; the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought : they shall enter into the king’s palace.*” In Ps. xlv. Solomon the bridegroom king is typical of Christ ; and by the queen we may understand the earthly Jerusalem, or Israel under the new covenant. The daughter of Pharaoh whom Solomon had taken as his wife, the subject of the Song of Solomon, is typical of the Church described as “the king’s daughter, all glorious within,” internally and externally beautified. The virgins her companions who follow her, and who enter into the king’s palace, correspond with the blessed ones who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. The Church as the bride is there by her own right. May we not understand by these called ones the saints of the former dispensation ? John the Baptist, who was one of the last of these, styles himself “the friend of the bridegroom,” and our Lord says concerning him, though one of the greatest of prophets, the “least in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he :” for to be a member of Christ’s mystic body, and to belong to the bride, is a far higher honour. The redeemed of every age will share the blessedness and the joy of this great event.

“And he saith unto me, ‘These are the true sayings of God.’”
So transcendently great and glorious are these revelations of the

Church's associations and prospects, faith requires an especial confirmation to enable it to grasp and realise them; hence the assurance here given, "These are the true sayings of God." Seeing that we look for such things, what manner of *persons* ought we to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness?

Verse 10. "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, 'See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'"

The Lord Jesus had sent His angel to show these things to His servant John, and Jesus speaks by him, and through him claims Divine honours. But when John would offer worship to the angel personally, this the angel refuses. He was but a fellow-servant with John and his brethren, who were witnesses for Christ. Divine worship must only be rendered to God, and to His Divine Son, to whom give all the prophets witness, and to the Eternal Spirit.

Verse 11. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him *was* called 'Faithful and True,' and in righteousness He doth judge and make war."

In chap. vi. 2 John saw a white horse with his rider, the emblem of Antichrist, the people's king, going forth for the establishment of his kingdom. Here we have the true Christ coming forth for the overthrow of His enemies, and for the commencement of His Millennial reign.

White is the emblem of strict, impartial justice—"judgment without mercy;" the white horse is emblematic of progressive judgment.

The day of salvation has lasted nearly two thousand years; similarly the day of judgment will not be confined to a brief period (2 Peter iii. 8), but during the Millennium, judgment on open sin will be immediately executed (Isa. lxx. 20). The judgment of the great white throne closes the scene, and will be final and for ever.

The name of the rider, "Faithful and True," reminds us that He is not only faithful to His promises to His saints, but true to His threatenings to His enemies; and when He comes it will not only be for the execution of righteous judgment, but to make war against all who oppose His rightful reign.

Verse 12. "His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns [diadems, or regal crowns]; and He had

a name written, that no man [no one] knew, but He Himself."

The judgment which He executes is not only characterised by strict justice, but is the result of an infinite knowledge; nothing can escape Him. He would not let His servants separate the tares from the wheat (Matt. xiii.), but He comes with that eye which discovers the secrets of all hearts.

As the Overcomer, we now see Him crowned with the stephanos or victor's crown (Heb. ii. 9). In this vision He appears with the diadem or regal crown, the mark of universal empire—His many diadems significant of universal dominion and empire—the King of kings and Lord of lords.

He has promised to the overcomer (chap. ii. 17) the white stone and the new name which no one knows but the receiver—the token of secret and confidential approval, a joy which the stranger intermeddleth not with. In like manner He Himself, the faithful Servant, has received from His Father the secret expression of a Divine estimate, which none beside can know.

Verse 13. "And He *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and His name is called 'The Word of God.'"

Compare Isa. lxiii. 1-6 and chap. xiv. 17-20. Although the judgment on Babylon was executed by the instrumentality of the ten kings, yet it was in reality the judgment of the Son of Man, for He it is who treads "the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (chap. xix. 15).

He is the Word of God, not only as the One who reveals God in creation, providence, and redemption, but also in the manifestation of His righteous judgment.

Verse 14. "And the armies *which were* in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

This is the manifestation of the Son of Man, when every eye shall see Him; not "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him" (2 Thess. ii. 1); not His coming to receive His saints to Himself (John xiv. 3), but His manifestation with them, for "when Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). For "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from *the* presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be

admired in all them that believe" (2 Thess. i. 7-10). "The Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints" (Jude 14); or, as saith the Prophet Zechariah, "And Jehovah my God shall come, *and all the saints with thee*" (Zech. xiv. 5). When the Lord Jesus is thus revealed, the angels of His power accompany Him; and the redeemed of every age, who being conformed to Him in glory, will unite in the manifestation of the splendour of His coming. As the armies of the heavens, they will also be associated with Him in the execution of those righteous judgments, whereby His kingdom will be established upon the earth.

"Upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

Whether the saints in resurrection glory or His holy angels, those who accompany Him are all holy, and take part with Him in the execution of His righteous judgment.

Verse 15. "And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and ~~He~~ shall rule them with a rod of iron: and ~~He~~ treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

By the word of His power the judgment is executed (Ps. ii. 9; Isa. xi. 4; 2 Thess. ii. 8). It is not now the gentle rod, which comforts as well as supports the sheep of His pasture, but the iron rod of irresistible might.

Though judgment upon apostate Babylon has been executed, "His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still" against the culmination of evil.

Verse 16. "And He hath on *His* vesture and on His thigh *a* name written, 'King of kings and Lord of lords.'"

See 1 Tim. vi. 14, 15. "The appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in His own times He shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." Conspicuous on His vesture, and inscribed on His thigh, is His name. Thus He appears as invested with universal dominion and lordship.

Verses 17, 18. "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, 'Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat *the* flesh of kings, and *the* flesh of captains, and *the* flesh of mighty men, and *the* flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and *the* flesh of all *men*, both free and bond, both small and great.'"

This is emblematic of a preparation for world-wide destruction, for “*the slain of Jehovah shall be many*” (Isa. lxvi. 16); and provision is hereby made for the removal of the carcasses from the scene of slaughter. “For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.”

Verse 19. “And I saw the beast [wild beast], and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army.”

Here we have Ps. ii. 1-4 finally fulfilled. It is the great confederacy of the nations against Jehovah, and against His Christ. They have already put down apostate Christianity, with all its corruptions; they now conspire against the true Christ and His faithful followers. We learn from Zech. xiv. 1-3 that the gathering place is around Jerusalem, and at first they appear on the highroad to success: they begin to say, “Peace and safety;” then sudden destruction comes upon them from which there is no escape.

Verse 20. “And the beast [wild beast] was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

The wild beast and the false prophet are taken, and are cast alive, having their bodies “salted with fire” (Mark ix. 49), into the lake of fire burning with brimstone (Isa. xxx. 33; Dan. vii. 11).

Verse 21. “And the remnant [rest] were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.”

Those enemies that would not have Messiah to reign over them are slain before Him (Luke xix. 27), and thus the Son of Man prepares, by the execution of righteous judgment, for the establishment of His kingdom in prosperity and peace.

CHAPTER XX.

Verses 1-3. "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit [abyss] and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, *that* old serpent, which is *the* Devil [false accuser], and Satan [adversary], and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon [over] him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."

An angel had been sent to John in Patmos, to show unto him, by signs or symbols, things which were to come to pass hereafter; and the beloved disciple has written those visions and foreshadowings of future things for our instruction.

He sees an angel lay hold on the dragon, the old serpent, who has deceived the world for six thousand years, and put him under restraint for a period of one thousand years, having his place in the bottomless pit, shut up and sealed. Satan's power for a time will be at an end, in all its varied branches and ramifications,—this is implied by the variety of titles given to him. "The Dragon" is a name that describes him as the fierce, persecuting enemy of God's people. "That old Serpent;" by this title we are reminded of the scene of temptation in the Garden of Eden, as recorded in Genesis; it shows him as grown old and experienced in his deceptive wiles. "The Devil," *Diabolus*, the accuser of God's saints before Him, and "Satan," the adversary of the people of God. Henceforth there will be no more persecution, no more temptation, no more accusation, and no more evil done by him to the saints for one thousand years. It is sometimes said that the wickedness we see in the world is occasioned by priestcraft, kingcraft, false teaching, &c.; but God will try man under the best of governments, that of Messiah, taking away all the adverse circumstances which would lead man into sin, leaving him entirely unfettered, in order to prove whether, under the most favourable auspices, he will turn to God; or whether, as Scripture asserts, "the flesh profiteth nothing" (John vi. 63), and that "every man at his best estate is altogether vanity" (Ps. xxxix. 5), and that "the carnal mind is enmity against God" (Rom. viii. 7).

We have no evidence of death during that period, excepting as we

find it written in Isa. lxx. 20: "The child shall die a hundred years old; but the sinner *being* a hundred years old shall be accursed." That is, if sin is committed, judgment will be speedily executed, but the offender, though a hundred years of age, will be considered only as a child, because of the Millennial length of days. And when the thousand years is ended, after man has been tried with every advantage in his favour, Satan must be loosed for a season, to see if man is prepared to admit the authority of God.

Verses 4, 5. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which [those which] had not worshipped the beast [wild beast], neither his image, neither *had* received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in [and upon] their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection."

"I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them."

In chap. xix. 14 we have seen the saints of the heavenlies following the King of kings on His white horse; when He comes for the execution of righteous judgment they also are conformed to Him, sitting on white horses, and clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

So, when He sits on the throne of His glory, they also share the kingdom with Him, for it is a faithful saying, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. ii. 12; Daniel vii. 18, 22, 27). These seen sitting on thrones are the dead in Christ who rise first, including all who have died in the faith of Christ, from Abel downward, and also those living and remaining ones who are changed and caught up to meet Him when He comes, according to 1 Thess. iv. 14-17.

"*I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God," &c.

There are three classes who share in the first resurrection. First, "they that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. xv. 23). The second class are those who are slain for their positive resistance to the claims of Antichrist, and who are spoken of in Rev. vi. 9-11 as the souls under the altar (and as the man child of chap. xii. 5), who are told to wait till their companions also had been slain.

The third class are those who are subsequently slain for their passive resistance, who would not receive the mark of the beast or the number of his name; the companions mentioned in chap. vi. 11, and the remnant of the woman's seed in chap. xii. 17, who together appear

as the innumerable multitude of chap. vii. 9. These are first described as "souls," but it is added they "lived;" this expression, according to verse 5, implies and signifies their resurrection.

This is the first resurrection—the resurrection of the just (Luke xiv. 14); the resurrection of life (John v. 29).

These three classes, though not all raised at the same time, all have part in the first resurrection; they live and reign with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead live not again—that is, they are not raised until after the thousand years are completed, when they rise to the resurrection of judgment (John v. 29) and stand before the great white throne (Rev. xx. 11–13). The secret of the first resurrection is referred to in Ps. xlix. 13–15.

Verse 6. "Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such [over these] the second death hath no power [authority], but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

In Luke xx. 35, 36, the words of the Lord Jesus are: "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world [orage] and the resurrection from *the* dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are *the* children of God, being *the* children of the resurrection."

They are both priests and kings, sharing in the Melchisedec reign and priesthood of the Lord Jesus. "Priests of God," as ministering to Him in the priests' office in the heavenly sanctuary; "and of Christ," as under Him, the great High Priest; "and shall reign with Him," sharing His kingdom. This is the privilege of all the risen saints, whether of the dead in Christ who rise first, of those who are raised or changed at the coming of the Lord Jesus for His Church, or of those who come out of the great tribulation.

Verses 7–9. "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters [corners] of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."

What a wonderful light these few verses throw on the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of the prophecy of Ezekiel! After Israel had been gathered from all nations and restored to their own land, dwelling safely and confidently for a thousand years, during

which period the glory of God had been manifested to all, and the knowledge of Jehovah had covered the earth as the waters cover the sea, and nation had not lifted up sword against nation nor had been instructed in the arts of war, at the close of this Millennial period, Satan having been again let loose, deceives the nations that are in the utmost parts of the earth, and instigates them to come up against the land of Israel "to take a spoil . . . to take a prey, to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil" (see Ezek. xxxviii. 8-13). He it is who puts it into their mind "to think an evil thought," or "devise an evil device," and to say, "I will go up to the land of unwalld villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely" (verses 10, 11).

The northern nations, characterised as Gog and Magog, together with other peoples from various parts, come up "against the mountains of Israel" (verse 8) "as a cloud to cover the land" (verse 9) and compass "the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city" (Rev. xx. 9)—a multitude "the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea" (verse 8). The weapons of their warfare will be apparently of the most primitive kind, extemporised for the occasion; hence we do not read of cannons and guns, but of shields, bucklers, bows, arrows, and handstaves, which are capable of being burnt, Ezek. xxxix. 9, 10. But God fights against them "with pestilence, and with blood . . . an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone" (Ezek. xxxviii. 22). "Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (Rev. xx. 9). The slaughter so great, and the overthrow so complete, that, after the fowls of heaven and the beasts of the field have been filled with their flesh, seven months will be occupied with their burial and seven years in the cleansing of the land (see Ezek. xxxix. 9-20).

This is the last trial of man in the flesh, and the last manifestation of the righteous judgment of God on the wickedness of mankind on the earth.

Verse 10. "And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast [wild beast] and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

See chap. xix. 20. *Diabolus*, the false accuser and deceiver, the god of this world; the beast, the false Christ or Antichrist; and the false prophet, who is the great counterfeit and opposer of the Spirit of God—three distinct personalities—these three, the trinity of hell, have their eternal abode in the lake of fire and brimstone.

Their due and righteous portion.

Verse 11. "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled *away*; and there was found no place for them."

When the sign of the Son of Man appears in heaven, and He comes to take His Millennial throne, then "the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and say to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us'" (Rev. vi. 15, 16). But there are no mountains and rocks to fall on those who stand before the great white throne; they are left defenceless and exposed.

"Great white throne." It is a "throne," for here God sits in His absolute authority and almighty power; it is a "great" throne, for this is the "judgment of the great day" (Jude 6); and it is "white," the emblem of strict, impartial righteousness, and Divine, inflexible justice. He that sits upon it is God, not in His fatherly character of grace and love, but God in the person of the Son; "for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John v. 22, 23).

This is not the bema or judgment seat of Christ, before which the risen saints will stand, at His appearing, to receive the estimate and reward of works done in His name (2 Cor. v. 10); nor the throne of glory, before which the living nations of the earth will stand when the Son of Man comes to take His Millennial kingdom (Matt. xxv. 31, 32); but the throne of strict, impartial judgment, set up when the responsibility of man on the earth will have ceased for ever and earth's history is closed.

The earth has been polluted by the iniquity of man (Isa. xxiv. 5), and the heavens have been contaminated by the defection of the fallen angels, and "are not clean in His sight" (Job xv. 15). In the presence, therefore, of Him who is of "purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity" (Hab. i. 13), they flee away.

While the earth remaineth, the blood of atonement had availed, and God had kept His covenant—"Seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. viii. 22); but now the day of grace and longsuffering is over, and justice takes the throne.

Between verse 10, which speaks of Satan's judgment, and verse 11, which speaks of the great white throne, 2 Pet. iii. 10-12 will receive its accomplishment: the day of God will come "in *the* which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and *the* elements shall

melt with fervent heat, *the* earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

Verses 12, 13. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened ; and another book was opened, which is the book of life : and the dead were judged out of *those* things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead *which were* in it ; and death and hell [hades] delivered up the dead *which were* in them : and they were judged every man according to their works."

This is not the judgment of the "quick" or living, but of the dead—of all who have no part in the first resurrection—"the dead, small and great ;" not the dead in Christ who share in the first resurrection, on whom "the second death hath no power" (verse 6), but the rest of the dead who live "not again until the thousand years were finished" (verse 5) ; for Jehovah hath sworn, "Every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Rom. xiv. 11). All therefore must give account of himself, either before the "bema" or judgment seat of Christ, or before the great white throne.

"The books were opened."

No sin or sinful thought can be forgotten ; a record is kept of all, and the books will be opened ; "for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed ; and hid, that shall not be known" (Matt. x. 26).

This is the resurrection of judgment spoken of by our Lord Jesus in John v. 28, 29, for all who are in the graves shall come forth, either to the resurrection of life—the first resurrection—or to the resurrection of judgment, to stand before the great white throne.

Verses 14, 15. "And death and hell [hades] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

From henceforth, throughout the illimitable universe of God and throughout the boundless ages of eternity, no more separation of soul and body, no more death except in the lake of fire ; and whosoever was not found written in the book of life will have their eternal portion there. On the one hand, eternal death, without the prospect or the hope of life ; on the other hand, eternal life, without the fear or possibility of death.

CHAPTER XXI.

Verse 1. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth *were* passed away; and there was no more sea."

In Isa. lxxv. 17-25 we read of a new heavens and a new earth, but that is clearly a Millennial scene; it is "the time of the restitution of all things" (Acts iii. 21), the partial renovation going on to a fuller accomplishment; but there is still death (Isa. lxxv. 20).

Peter tells us "that one day *is* with Jehovah as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day;" "but the day of Jehovah will come as a thief in *the* night" (2 Pet. iii. 8, 10), when the prophecies of the ancient Scriptures will have their accomplishment. This "day of Jehovah" continues for a thousand years: then comes the eternal state, ushered in by "the day of God, wherein *the* heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and *the* elements *shall* melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for 'new heavens and a new earth,' wherein dwelleth righteousness" (verses 12, 13). The former heavens and earth having passed away before the presence of Him who sat on the great white throne, out of the original elements purified by fire will come a new constitution of things, wherein the waters of the ocean will no longer occupy the position they once held, covering the larger portion of the globe.

Verse 2. "And ¶ John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

From verse 9 onward the bride is described in connection with the Millennial reign. Here she is seen in association with her Lord in the post-Millennial and eternal reign; she is seen under the emblem of a city descending from heaven—"the holy city," in harmony with the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

"New Jerusalem." Not the earthly Jerusalem of the past, with its long catalogue of sins and woes; not that city over which Jesus wept, where also our Lord was crucified; not the Millennial city so beautifully described in Isa. lx., Ezek. xlvi. 15-35; nor even that heavenly Jerusalem which Abraham looked for—a fixed locality (Heb. xi. 10, xii. 22, xiii. 14); but as a "city coming down;" for it is a descent—her proper place and her eternal inheritance is in the heavens above.

“From God.” From His immediate presence in highest glory.

“Out of the heavens,” for she is heavenly in her origin and character.

“Prepared as a bride.” In chap. xix. 7 we read that she had “made herself ready” for the marriage; now she has been prepared by God for association with the Lord Jesus in His eternal glory. She had lived and reigned with Him for a thousand years in the Millennial reign; she comes now in all the freshness of the affections of a bride to share with Him His kingdom over a renovated earth.

“Adorned for her husband.” As Bridegroom He had come to receive her to Himself; here His title is that of Husband, in token of eternal relationship. Her adornment is not for her own satisfaction, but “for her Husband,” that He may be glorified.

Descending out of heaven, not to the earth, she occupies an intermediate position.

Verse 3. “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell [tabernacle] with them, and ~~they~~ shall be His people [peoples], and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.’”

The voice of one speaking from heaven: “Behold”—take notice; there is something of wondrous import here. “The tabernacle of God;” not the temple, or the city, for it is an earthly scene.

“With men.” This teaches that there will be men on the renovated earth, not a new race of beings altogether. “And He will dwell [tabernacle] with them.” When God planted a garden in Eden, He had His walks with our first parents in the cool of the day, and He will have His Eden walks with men once more on the earth. When God brought Israel out of Egypt, His word was, “Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.” This desire of God for fellowship with His favoured people will be here fully accomplished.

“And they shall be His people [peoples]. This word “peoples” in the plural implies distinct nationalities, teaching us that as the nations of them that are saved will walk in the light of the holy city during the Millennial period, so also these peoples on the renovated earth will have the tabernacle of God in the midst of them, and will continue to walk in the light of the holy city.

When God brought the deluge of water upon the world, all excepting those preserved in the ark were destroyed; and Peter tells us in his second epistle (iii. 7): “The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto

fire against *the* day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." The deluge of water was a foreshadowing of the deluge of fire. Jehovah knows how to deliver His people. As He did with Noah, so He can do with Israel and the living nations, and carry them through the deluge of fire, transplanting them to the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The word "tabernacle" implies that the scene is temporary. God's throne is in the heavens, but He will tabernacle with men. These may enjoy His presence on earth for a while, and then be translated to a heavenly sphere. Thus, it would appear, God will ultimately carry out His original design, as intimated in the case of Enoch, who, when he had completed the cycle of his earthly course—three hundred and sixty-five years, a day for a year—was translated: "he was not; for God took him" (Gen. v. 24).

Verse 4. "'And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.'"

The bright morning of an eternal day without a cloud now dawns; no trace left of transgression or sin, with their bitter consequences of sorrow, pain, and death; they are gone for ever.

What is spoken of in Rom. viii. 21, though partially fulfilled in the Millennium, will now receive its full accomplishment—"The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Verse 5. "And He that sat upon the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' And He said unto me, 'Write: for these words are true and faithful.'"

In verse 3 it is a voice from heaven; here it is a voice from the throne—from the Triune God, Jehovah, in His sovereignty and majesty. "Behold"—take notice—He who made all things at the first now makes all things new.

"Write"—leave these things on record—"for these words are true and faithful." As surely as John saw these visions of bliss, so, if we are redeemed, we too shall see these wondrous realities of coming glory, and share them also. If our faith grasped more fully these true and faithful words, what manner of persons should we be?

Verses 6, 7. "And He said unto me, 'It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely

[gratuitously]. He that overcometh shall inherit all things ; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.’”

The speaker from the throne continues, “It is done.” The former verses of this chapter have brought us to the completion of all things. The prophetic portion of the book, properly speaking, ends here ; what is added after is supplementary. The responsibility of the creature is over ; angels have failed, and man has failed ; all things are henceforth headed up in Christ, the last Adam, “the head of the creation of God,” “the firstborn of every creature.” God, the Triune God, is henceforth all in all ; “for of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things : to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (Rom. xi. 36).

We have here the application of these truths to the present time—the promise of the Spirit of life to the thirsty, gratuitously—“without money and without price”—and the word of encouragement to the overcomer, who, though he may be called to suffer the loss of all things now, has the promise of an eternal inheritance, as an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ, not simply as one of His people (verse 3), but in the relationship of son, having God for his Father (Rom. viii. 17).

Jehovah is the fountain of living waters (Jer. ii. 13). Life and every spiritual blessing originates with the Father, is treasured up in and comes to us through the Son—the “one Mediator between God and man,” in whom “dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. ii. 9). This fulness is communicated to us by the Holy Ghost, who is Himself the living waters, coming from a glorified Christ (John vii. 38, 39), also symbolised by “the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. xxii. 1).

But who is the overcomer ? It is he who fights the good fight of faith, and lays hold on eternal life, counting all things but dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, preferring holiness to sin, heaven to earth, and God in Christ to all besides, saying with the Psalmist, “Whom have I in heaven but Thee ? and there is none on earth that I desire beside Thee.”

Verse 8. “‘But the fearful [cowardly], and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, *shall have* their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone : which is the second death.’”

What a dark background we have here to those bright and blessed promises in verses 6, 7 ! The Old Testament closes with the voice of

warning (Mal. iv. 6), and the Book of the Prophet Isaiah ends with the words, "They shall go forth, and look upon *the* carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." The Lord Jesus used this as a symbol of the eternal torment of the lost in Mark ix. 43-46; so the prophetic portion of this book closes with the solemn denunciation here recorded.

The fearful or cowardly are those who would say, as in Matt. xxv. 24, 25, "I knew thee that thou art a hard man . . . and I was afraid," &c.; who are afraid to trust God, and are overcome by the world, the flesh, and the Devil: these and "the unbelieving" go together.

Faith takes God at His word as Abraham did, and is as bold as a lion. First the timid, next the unbeliever; then follow the abominable, the murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars. Timidity says, "If I take the position of discipleship, I am afraid of the sneer and the laugh." Those who are afraid to accept God's truth are ready to receive Satan's lie, and shall share with him his eternal portion. They inherit death. If these solemn words should meet the eye of one unprepared for eternity, may such an one, by the grace of God, through faith in Jesus, accept and drink of the living waters, whilst now is the accepted time, and whilst now it is the day of salvation.

Verse 9. "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials [bowls], full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, 'Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.'"

"One of the seven angels." In chap. xv. 7 we read of the giving of the seven golden bowls to the seven angels by one of the four living ones; in chap. xvi. 17-19 the seventh angel is spoken of as pouring out his bowl into the air: "and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath;" in chap. xvii. 1 we read, "there came one of the seven angels which had the seven bowls, and talked with me, saying unto me, 'Come hither, I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore.'" He shows to John in the desert the false, apostate Church; one of the seven angels, and probably the same now shows to John the true and faithful Church, the bride.

"And talked with me." The converse of angels, next to that of the redeemed, will form one element of heaven's blessedness; they shouted for joy when the foundations of the earth were laid; they were present when the old serpent tempted Eve; they had witnessed

the violence of the antediluvian world, and the stupendous catastrophe when the world that then was was destroyed and all therein perished; they had been used by God in the destruction of the guilty cities of the plain; they had been partakers of Abraham's hospitality, and pulled out of guilty Sodom his nephew Lot; they came from heaven and sang praises to God at the birth of Immanuel, and gazed with adoring wonder at Bethlehem's manger; they ministered to Christ after His conflict with the enemy of souls, and strengthened Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. He had only to ask His Father, and twelve legions of angels were ready to avenge His cause. They had gathered awe-struck and reverent around the cross of an expiring Redeemer, and witnessed His resurrection and ascension.

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i. 14). Who carry the tidings with joy of another heir of immortal glory having come into existence? These angels are the witnesses of our trials and conflicts: they minister to us times without number; they have not only wings to fly in swift obedience to the will of God, but with twain they cover their feet; they hide their numberless acts of kindness from us now, but we shall hear of them by-and-by, how they bore up our feet lest we should at any time dash them against a stone.

"I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." He does not say, I will shew thee the habitation or home of the bride, but the bride herself, under the emblem of a city. And what emblem could be more appropriate? For what is a city but a large collection of habitations with their inhabitants? And what is the bride but the whole assembly of the redeemed of the present dispensation in their resurrection bodies, each and all clothed upon with their house which is from heaven (2 Cor. v. 2). Mark the twofold title, "bride" and "wife," for she is now entering upon the realisation of her new-found joy, in the fulness of bridal affection; it is the joy of marriage, not of espousals, the marriage supper has just taken place—it is the commencement of Millennial blessedness. Added to the joy and freshness of the bride, she has the stately dignity of wife; for the relationship is eternal. As she is here seen associated with Christ in His Millennial reign, so also, as shown in verse 2, she will be associated with Him in His eternal dominion over the renovated earth.

It is the self-same Lamb which, as the "*amnos*," had been sacrificed on the altar, who now appears as the "*arnion*," or young Lamb, in the vigour of resurrection life.

Verse 10. "And he carried me away in *the* Spirit to a great and high mountain."

It was on the Mount Sinai, where the law was given which had a shadow of good things to come, that Moses was shown the pattern of the Tabernacle. From the Mount of Olives the fullest and clearest view of the earthly city, Jerusalem, may be obtained; and in the visions of God the Prophet Ezekiel was set upon a very high mountain, there to be instructed in all the details of the Millennial Temple; and it is to a great and high mountain that John is carried away in the Spirit, there to contemplate the glories of that holy city which is the emblematic representation of the bride of the Lamb; and it is needful for us to rise in spirit above all carnal considerations and earthly associations, in order to form clear and adequate conceptions of these spiritual and eternal realities.

"And shewed me *that* great city."

Although the Church on earth, at any given time in comparison with the rest of mankind, may appear as a little flock, yet, when all are associated together, they will form a glorious monument of redeeming love, of the value of the atoning blood, and the mighty workmanship of the Divine eternal Spirit.

"The holy Jerusalem."

We must carefully distinguish between the holy Jerusalem here mentioned—which is the symbolic representation of the bride, the Lamb's wife—and "the heavenly Jerusalem" mentioned in Heb. xii. 22: the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, which Abraham looked for (Heb. xi. 10), and which we also seek (Heb. xiii. 14): a fixed heavenly locality, the metropolis of "the inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for us (1 Pet. i. 4).

The heavenly Jerusalem is a figurative locality, where the redeemed from every country will "sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens" (Matt. viii. 11); whereas "the holy Jerusalem" is emblematical of the Church in glory as the bride of the Lamb.

"Descending out of heaven."

In 2 Cor. v. 1-3 we read, "For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our HOUSE WHICH IS FROM HEAVEN: if so be *that* being clothed we shall not be found

naked." The "earthly house of this tabernacle" is the present mortal body; the "house not made with hands" is the resurrection, incorruptible, immortal body. The "tabernacle" is made from the dust of the earth; the "building of God" is from heaven.

The substance of the future resurrection body is not the corruptible material laid in the grave; this Paul demonstrates in 1 Cor. xv. 37, 38, "Thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other *grain*: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body." A grain of wheat is sown; from thence arises, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. An acorn is planted, thence arises in due season the full-grown oak. The bare or naked grain, or acorn, contains the germ, and God gives it a body as it pleases Him, but to every seed its own body; a grain of wheat never produces barley, nor an acorn a cedar.

In this present life the particles which compose the human frame, from infancy to old age, are undergoing an incessant change, so that during no two years are the atoms the same; yet there is a characteristic identity maintained throughout. This identity is not an identity of particles, but of personal individuality; so is the resurrection of the dead. Each individual will be raised, but the house or body with which he will be clothed will be a house from heaven, and such as God may be pleased to give.

"Descending out of heaven from God."

In each case when the bride is represented under the emblem of a city, she is seen not in heaven, but descending out of heaven; she had been there, and comes from thence. The marriage of the Lamb had been celebrated in heaven. Her royal palace home, the place which the heavenly Bridegroom is now gone to prepare for her, is in heaven, amidst the many mansions of the Father's house. But when her Lord condescends to come and reign over a Millennial earth, or over a post-Millennial and eternal world, she accompanies Him.

She not only descends from heaven, where her "inheritance" is "reserved" for her (1 Pet. i. 4), but from God, for she had been presented faultless before the presence of the glory with exceeding joy, and it is from His immediate presence that she comes forth to reign with Christ.

Verse 11. "Having the glory of God."

In that marvellous prayer of the Lord Jesus recorded in John xvii. the Lord passes in spirit beyond Calvary and the tomb, and realises the hour of glory come; and as no longer on earth, but having completed

the work there given Him to do, He requests of His Father to be glorified, as the obedient Son of Man, with the glory which He had in eternity with the Father as the eternal Son of God. Then He requests on behalf of those whom the Father had given Him out of the world, and for those who should afterward believe in Him through their word, a spiritual oneness even as the Father and the Son are one by one indwelling Spirit, which request was fulfilled when, by the Pentecostal Spirit, they were baptized into one body in fellowship with their risen Head. He then adds, "And the glory which Thou hast given Me (in answer to this prayer) I have given them, that they may be one, as we are one;" that is, that they may not only be one in the Spirit with the Father and the Son on earth, but one in manifested glory when the Son of God appears. Accordingly, the bride here is shown as "having the glory of God." In this vision is the prayer of the Lord answered; she has not only been with Him, and beheld the glory which the Father gave Him as the Eternal Son before all worlds (John xvii. 24), but, as the sharer with Him of the glory given Him as the obedient Son of Man, she now comes forth in the full manifestation of that glory.

"And her light [radiance *or* light-giving] *was* like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" [*Lit. crystallising*].

This holy city, emblematic of the bride, has within it the glory of God, "for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light [lamp] thereof," verse 23; but this glory shines forth through the jasper wall surrounding it with softened radiance and mingled beauty, like a lamp shining through variously tinted crystal. She is conformed in glory to Him that sitteth on the throne (chap. iv. 3), for "He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone." The jasper is a precious stone of various colours, and appears to be emblematical of the various perfections of God, which through the eternal Spirit will be manifested in the risen saints, even as the Temple of Solomon was garnished with all manner of precious stones.

Already, "God who commanded *the* light to shine out of darkness, *hath* shined in our hearts, to *give the* light of the knowledge of the glory of God in *the* face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor. iv. 6, 7). These gross material bodies are unfavourable mediums for the transmission of this light; not so the resurrection bodies of the redeemed. The light that shines through them, in softened and varied beauty, will be clear as crystal. It is remarkable that in the Greek, the word here rendered "clear as

crystal" is a participle—literally, crystallising. Does this imply that the radiance of this holy city will leave its impress on that on which it shines, transfiguring and conforming it to its own spirituality, purity, beauty, and glory? Even as the solar light not only irradiates with its lustre, but expands, beautifies, and fructifies, with its mingled rays of red, yellow, and blue, each having its distinctive property and leaving its permanent results.

The Father is the source or fountain of light; this light is manifested in the person of the Son, but is communicated by the Divine, eternal Spirit.

Even now it may be given us to realise the transforming [or transfiguring] power of spiritual light, for "we all, with open [unveiled] face, beholding as in a glass [or mirror] the glory of *the* Lord, are changed into [transformed *or* transfigured into] the same image from glory to glory, even as by *the* Spirit of *the* Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18).

Verses 12, 13. "And had [having] a wall great and high, *and* had [having] twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on [from] *the* east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; *and* on *the* west three gates."

Verses 17, 18. "And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, *according to the* measure of a man, that is, of *the* angel. And the building of the wall of it was *of* jasper."

There is a wall surrounding the city, in measure a hundred and forty and four cubits, probably in height and breadth. The building of this wall is of jasper; and it has twelve gates.

It is said of the earthly Jerusalem, "Thou shalt call thy walls 'Salvation,' and thy gates 'Praise'" (Isaiah lx. 18). The dwelling is in security, the outgoings in thanksgiving and praise. The wall is also suggestive of separation and distinctness; the Church in glory will ever maintain her distinct position and relationship as the bride of the Lamb, to the honour of the Father—"unto Him *be* glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Eph. iii. 21).

In the measurement of the wall there is a remarkable combination of the human and the angelic, for the cubit is the forearm of a man, but the measurement is that of an angel, for these are among the things that angels desire to look into.

The Church in her distinct position and calling is the revelation

of a "mystery, which from *the beginning of the world* [ages] hath been hid in God, who created all things by [through] Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by [through] the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to *the eternal purpose* which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. iii. 9-11).

The building of the wall is of jasper, for herein is displayed not only the manifold wisdom of God, but every Divine perfection, and the combination and harmony of these Divine perfections will give to the Church's distinct position its everlasting stability, permanence, and glory.

"Twelve gates."

This wall, great and high, while it clearly distinguishes, does not isolate; for it has twelve gates admitting free egress and ingress. Those who compose the holy city will have free access to all parts of the universe of God—for there are three gates: eastward, northward, southward, and westward, thus facilitating the going forth and returning, the carrying forth tidings of God and of the Lamb, and bringing in praise and thanksgiving.

"And at the gates twelve angels."

Those ministering spirits who are now sent forth on behalf of the heirs of salvation will still continue to carry out the purposes of Divine love in connection with the saints in glory; they have long been familiar with the scenes of beauty and interest which abound in the material universe, and with its happy and unfallen intelligences, and they will keep themselves ready, in harmony with the Divine will, to accompany the redeemed in their blissful ministrations of love whithersoever God and the Lamb and the eternal Spirit may send them.

These gates have on them "the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel." As the title "Holy Jerusalem" is symbolical, so are the names of the twelve tribes; and as the twelve tribes of Israel constitute it one nation, so the redeemed with all their various diversities of character and qualification for service will constitute one Church, even as the different members form one body, the bride of Christ.

Verse 21. "And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl."

According to Matt. xiii. 45, 46, "the one pearl of great price" is the emblem of the Church in its costliness, for it is the purchase of

the blood of Christ who loved it and gave Himself for it (Eph. v. 25-27). Also of its purity and beauty, as sanctified and cleansed and presented without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; and in its oneness, as being the workmanship of the one Divine, eternal Spirit. The twelve gates have one appearance, and this aspect of oneness and purity and beauty appears on every side; for those who will compose the Church in glory have all been redeemed by the same precious blood, and sanctified, perfected, and united in one by the same all-pervading and uniting Spirit.

Verse 14. "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them *the* names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

We here notice another distinction between the heavenly Jerusalem of Heb. xii. 22 and the holy city here described. The heavenly Jerusalem is spoken of as a city having foundations fixed, unmovable, eternal in the heavens. But it is the outer wall surrounding the holy city which is said in verse 14 to have twelve foundations. As to the Church or city itself, "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. iii. 11). That which distinguishes the Church as the bride of the Lamb from all that went before, and from all that will follow after, is that broad line of demarcation consisting in those great truths kept hid from ages and generations, but revealed to, and made known by the apostles of the Lord and Saviour, and especially by the Apostle Paul. He writes in Eph. iii. 2, 3, 5: "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; . . . which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by *the* Spirit;" and, again, in Eph. ii. 19, 20: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being *the* chief corner stone." These eternal purposes of God concerning the Church were indeed foreshadowed from the very first, as in Adam and Eve in Paradise, and so, in other ways, again and again; but the full revelation was given by the Holy Ghost in apostolic times (see 1 Cor. ii. 7-10).

Verses 19, 20. "And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* garnished with all manner of precious stones."

The first foundation *was* jasper (of various colours).

The second, sapphire (blue).

The third, *a* chalcedony (grey).

The fourth, *an* emerald (green).

The fifth, sardonyx (from “sardius” and the “nail”).

The sixth, sardius (blood-red).

The seventh, chrysolyte (gold-stone).

The eighth, beryl (sea-green).

The ninth, *a* topaz (yellow).

The tenth, *a* chrysoprasus (gold and a leek).

The eleventh, *a* jacinth (purple).

The twelfth, *an* amethyst (violet).

The Greek for amethyst means “not drunken,” hence significant of temperance.

The jasper wall surrounding the city studded with twelve pearls of transcendent beauty, and jewelled in its lower rim with gems of every variety of colour and lustre, forcibly reminds us of the words of the prophet concerning the earthly Jerusalem: “Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in *the* hand of Jehovah, and a royal diadem in *the* hand of thy God” (Isa. lxii. 3). “For *they shall be as the stones* of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon His land” (Zech. ix. 16). Such also will the Church appear when the Lord is revealed, for “He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe” (2 Thess. i. 10).

The twelve precious stones in the high priest’s breastplate of judgment were significant of the Lord’s estimate of His people, His heart’s secret estimate of their various characteristics and diversities of excellence.

The twelve precious stones that embellish the foundations of the wall of the holy city are emblematic of these varied excellences in manifested glory, and they lie at the very foundation of that which distinguishes the Church as the bride of Christ from all beside.

David provided for the house of Jehovah “onyx stones, and *stones* to be set, glistering stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones” (1 Chron. xxix. 2); and Solomon “garnished the house with precious stones for beauty” (2 Chron. iii. 6); typical of the fact that the whole of the redeemed in resurrection glory will be resplendent with every excellency, virtue, and perfection of the Divine, eternal Spirit; for the Temple of Solomon includes in its typical representation all the risen saints.

These excellences and manifestations of the perfections of the Spirit of God will also shine conspicuously in the Church as one in the Spirit with her glorified Lord, symbolised by these precious stones in the wall surrounding the holy city.

Verse 15. "And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof."

With regard to the future earthly Jerusalem, we thus read in Zech. ii. 1-5, "I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then said I, 'Whither goest thou?' And he said unto me, 'To measure Jerusalem, to see what *is* the breadth thereof, and what *is* the length thereof.' And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, and said unto him, 'Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited *as* towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: For I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be *the* glory in *the* midst of her.'" The measurements of the Millennial earthly city Jerusalem are given in Ezek. xlvi. But we have here to do with the holy city, New Jerusalem, of which the earthly city will be a type.

The measurement of the temple, in which the abomination of desolation will be set up, is thus referred to in Rev. xi. 1: "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, 'Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.'"

When the measurement of the future Millennial temple is described, the Prophet Ezekiel thus writes—(chap. xl. 3)—"Behold, *there was* a man, whose appearance *was* like *the* appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and *a* measuring reed."

In these instances, as no material is mentioned, it would appear to have been an ordinary measuring reed; but here the angel who talked with John had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates, and the wall, for the standard is Divine, the estimate Divine, not according to human thought, but according to the mind and thoughts of God.

Verse 16. "And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed [unto], twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal."

Of the earthly city it is said, "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together" (Ps. cxxii. 3): and the future Millennial city will also be foursquare, four thousand five hundred reeds each way (Ezek. xlvi. 16)—the length as large as the breadth.

But with regard to the holy city, another thing is mentioned—the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. It is

a perfect cube ; in this respect it coincides with the most holy place in the tabernacle, which was ten cubits each way, and the holy of holies in the temple, which is twenty cubits in length, breadth, and height.

With regard to the measurement of the city there is one thing to be noticed : in the original it reads, "He measured the city with the reed unto [Greek, *epi*] twelve thousand furlongs," as implying that he measured thus far and then ceased. And this reminds us of the apostle's prayer in Eph. iii. 14-19 : "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom *the* whole [*or* every] family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man ; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; and to know *the* love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with [into] all the fulness of God."

We need the golden measuring reed—that is, to be strengthened with might by God's Spirit in the inner man—in order to comprehend, in some humble measure, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of God's eternal purposes and plans ; and to know in some small degree what is the love of Christ which passeth knowledge ; what is comprehended in that word, "saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation." Loved with a love unchangeable, from everlasting to everlasting ; saved from an abyss of endless woe, raised to a height of ever-increasing blessedness and glory, exempted from every evil, and blessed with every spiritual blessing. Herein are depths unfathomable, heights unutterable, breadths and lengths immeasurably vast, the full realisation of which is beyond our power. Like some tiny shell, filled into the ocean depths, or like some little fish swimming in a shoreless ocean. Even so may the soul that receives from "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory," the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, to know what is the hope of His calling, realise something of those wondrous words, "filled into all the fulness of God ;" living, moving, having our being in Him whose wisdom, love, and power are infinite, eternal, and Divine.

While every ransomed soul is loved with the same love, saved with the same salvation, secured by the same almighty power, and equally blessed with all spiritual blessings, yet the relationship of the Church to Christ as the bride of the Lamb is the deep mystery of God, and this is what is symbolised here.

Verse 18. "And the city *was* pure gold, like unto clear glass."

Verse 21. "And the street of the city *was* pure gold, as it were transparent glass."

Gold is the emblem of the Divine nature and glory; glass appears to be emblematic of spirituality, purity, and transparency. Thus we read in 1 Cor. xv. 43 of the resurrection body, "it is raised in glory:" and in verse 44 "it is raised a spiritual body." In the city the two emblems are combined; the saints are seen in all the purity and spirituality of their resurrection bodies, but, as conformed to the image of Christ, radiant with Divine glory. For "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify *and* cleanse it with the washing of water by *the* word, that He might present it to Himself *a* glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 25-27).

How transcendently glorious and beautiful must this holy city have appeared in vision to John, rising upwards and stretching away, far as the eye could reach, in unsullied splendour! In appearance like pure light consolidated into form, with the yellow or luminous ray predominant.

The street may be regarded as emblematical of the intercourse or intercommunication of the saints in light, one with another, walking worthy of God in all transparency of character, in simplicity, and godly sincerity.

Verse 22. "And I saw no temple therein: for Jehovah God Almighty and the Lamb are *the* temple of it."

No one part more sacred than another; all the saints in glory dwell in God and in the Lamb; and God and the Lamb, by the eternal Spirit, dwells in them. They worship, serve, and abide in the immediate presence of God and of the Lamb, dwelling in the secret place of the Most High, and abiding under the shadow of the Almighty. God no longer the "little sanctuary," like the Tabernacle in the wilderness, following them in their earthly pilgrimage; but the Temple wherein they will unitedly assemble and worship God, who is a Spirit, in Spirit and in truth.

So also the Millennial Temple will not be in the city of Jerusalem, but distinct from it (Ezek. xlvi.), on the mountain of Jehovah's house (Isa. ii. 2), unlike the Temple of Solomon, that stood on Mount Moriah.

In John xvii. 21-23 the Lord Jesus thus prays on behalf of His blood-bought and Spirit-anointed Church: "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, *art* in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou didst send

Me. And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them ; that they may be one, even as We are one : I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me."

In the holy city we see the complete fulfilment of this prayer. The Church will not only be one as baptized by one Spirit into one body, one Spirit with their risen Lord, but one in manifested glory ; as sharing in the glory given by the Father to the obedient Son of Man, made perfect in glory as one with the Father, and one with the Son, by the indwelling of the eternal Spirit.

" There no temple rose before me,
There no glory shone above ;
All was temple, all was glory,
All in all was God, and love."

Verse 23. " And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it : for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light [lamp] thereof."

The saints in glory will be independent of external sources of knowledge and enjoyment—of these they have " no need," for God Himself and the Lamb are their all-satisfying portion ; yet, while thus independent of externals, their God will give them all things richly to enjoy, for, as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, all things are theirs. Like the earthly Millennial city, the pattern of the holy Jerusalem above, the name of that city from henceforth will be " Jehovah Shammah"—" Jehovah is there" (Ezek. xlviii. 35). They will for ever enjoy the manifestation of God in the face of Jesus Christ, Who is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person ; while the Holy Spirit, Who searcheth all things, even the deep things of God, will be to them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

In Isa. lx. 19, 20, it is thus written of the future earthly Jerusalem :—

" The sun shall be no more thy light by day ;
Neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee :
But Jehovah shall be unto thee an everlasting light,
And thy God thy glory.
Thy sun shall no more go down ;
Neither shall thy moon withdraw itself :
For Jehovah shall be thine everlasting light,
And the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

In what manner this prophecy will be accomplished, we may learn from Isa. iv. 5: "Jehovah will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and *the* shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all *the* glory shall be a defence."

The cloudy pillar which accompanied the children of Israel in their wilderness wanderings, and spread itself over their camp in shade by day and light by night—the token to them of Divine protection and care—will again in fuller splendour be the emblem of the manifestation of the presence and glory of God with Israel.

In the holy city, New Jerusalem, this glory will be seen in all its unclouded brightness, and without a veil between; for they shall see face to face, and know as they are known.

In the holy place of the Tabernacle there was the golden lampstand, with its seven lamps, and in the most holy place God appeared in the cloud upon the mercy-seat, and between the cherubim of glory (Lev. xvi. 2).

In the Temple of Solomon, in the holy place, there were windows above, and ten golden lampstands with their seventy burning lamps; in the holiest of all there were no windows nor lampstand, for God said that He would "dwell in the thick darkness" (2 Chron. vi. 1); but at the dedication of the Temple "*the* glory of Jehovah filled the house of Jehovah" (2 Chron. v. 14).

In the Millennial Temple of Ezekiel there is no mention made of lampstands in the holy place, nor of the ark of the covenant in the most holy place; but Ezekiel in vision saw "*the* glory of the Elohim of Israel come from *the* way of the east;" and "*the* glory of Jehovah filled the house" (Ezek. xliii. 2-5). As in the Millennial Temple the presence of the manifested and indwelling glory takes the place of all foreshadowing types, so in the holy city there will be the manifestation of the unclouded glory of the Father in the person of the Son, in the full unfolding of the Holy Ghost, "for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light [lamp] thereof." And as a lamp cannot burn without oil, so neither can the glory of God be manifested in the person of Christ apart from the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Verses 24-26. "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it."

"When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him," and when He shall sit on the throne of His glory, as entering on His Millennial reign, then will He say to those nations whom He has placed on His right hand, who have befriended the persecuted saints in the great tribulation, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv. 34). These saved nations will walk in the light of the holy city.

Between the day when the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead and the time when He was received up into heaven, He was seen of His disciples, during forty days, instructing them in the things of the kingdom, throwing light on the sacred page, encouraging and enlightening with Divine and sacred truth; after the same pattern, we may conclude that the risen saints will be made the medium of communications to the dwellers on the Millennial earth of the light of Divine and spiritual truth.

And as the Lord Jesus in His intercourse with the two disciples, on the way to Emmaus, appeared to them "in another form," and not in His risen glory, and hence not recognised at first, even so the glorified saints will not only veil their faces when they worship before the throne, but also veil their glories when they minister to the nations on the earth.

There is a beautiful type of this in the instructions given to the priests of the family of Zadok, in connection with the Millennial Temple, recorded in Ezek. xlv. 15-19. Those priests, whose office it will be to minister in the sanctuary and in the inner court, are not to minister to the people in the outer court in the same garments wherein they minister within, but to put on other garments, and thus minister to the people.

The risen and glorified ones, who are represented by the holy city, not only communicate to the saved nations of the Millennial earth the light and truth of the Spirit of God, which they themselves enjoy in all its fulness at the fountain head, but through them, as a royal and holy priesthood, the kings and nations of the earth ascribe all glory and honour to God and to the Lamb. (Compare Isaiah lx. 11.) And these communications of light and blessing from above, and glory and honour from the earth, go on without intermission—for the gates shall not be shut at all by day, and there shall be no night there.

Verse 27. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Compare with this the earthly counterpart and type (Isaiah lii. 1) :—

“Awake, awake : put on thy strength, O Zion ;
Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city :
For henceforth there shall no more come into thee *the* uncircumcised and *the* unclean.”

Those who are represented in emblem as composing the city will not only be pure in themselves, but holy in all their associations, intercourse, and communication with others.

There is a distinction to be kept in mind between the citizens of a city and those visitors or others who may have inter-communion with it. As we have observed, the wall which marks off the city as distinct does not isolate it ; there are three gates on each side, and those gates are open continually, and never closed. Redemption through the blood of the Lamb, the name written in the book of the slain Lamb, not only gives a title to “the tree of life,” but also to “enter in through the gates into the city” (Rev. xxii. 14).

That holiness which becomes the house of God for ever (Ps. xciii. 5), is becoming also to the bride of the Lamb.

On its encircling wall, and on its every gate, may well be written the inscription, “Holiness to Jehovah.”

Not only is unrighteousness excluded from finding any entrance, but also falsehood in all its varied forms : for God is a God of truth as well as without iniquity.

CHAPTER XXII.

Verses 1, 2. “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear [bright] as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In *the* midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there the* tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, and yielded her fruit every month : and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.”

The earthly and literal type of this river of life we have in Ezek. xlvii. 1, 2, 12 : “Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house ; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward : for the forefront of the house *stood toward the*

east, and the waters came down from under, from the right side of the house, at the south *side* of the altar. Then brought he me out . . . unto the utter [outer] gate by *the* way that looketh eastward; and behold, there ran out waters on the right side. . . . And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed [fail]: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine."

See also Ps. xlv. 4: "*There is* a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God;" and Zech. xiv. 8: "And it shall be in that day, *that* living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; in summer and in winter shall it be."

In the vision of Ezekiel the waters are seen issuing from under the threshold of the sanctuary; the type of Divine and spiritual life in the lowliness of its origin from under the threshold, and the holiness of its character from the temple; ankle deep at first, but widening and deepening as it flows, and carrying with it life, fertility, and verdure in its course. These waters supersede the brazen sea and lavers of the Temple of Solomon, and, passing along the south side of the altar, flow out eastward and onward to Jerusalem, and, passing through the city, divide to the east and west: the type of life in the Spirit, in its holiness and purity, through the incarnation and spotless life and crucifixion of Christ the Lamb on the altar.

In Revelation this life in the Spirit, in its transcendent purity and excellency, is represented as proceeding from the throne of God—from Jehovah, the fountain of living waters—in His sovereignty; and from the Lamb, now no longer the Lamb on the altar, but the Lamb on the throne—from a once crucified but a now glorified Christ; and this river flows through the street of the city, beautifully exemplifying those words of Jesus recorded in John vii. 37-39: "If any *man* thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture *hath* said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe in Him should receive; for *the* Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" In John vii. it is individual; in Rev. xxii. it is collective—for those who compose the bride. "By one Spirit are all baptized into one body . . . and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 13).

The street of the city is always spoken of in the singular number (Rev. xxi. 21, xxii. 2), as though there were but one; perhaps by this street we are to understand the broad place surrounding the city, between the city and the jasper wall with its twelve gates.

This pure river of water of life, clear or bright as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb, first passing onwards through the city, appears to cross this street or broadway, probably on the east in harmony with the vision of Ezekiel, and then passes forth through one of the gates.

“And on either side of the river *was there the tree of life bearing twelve manner of fruits.*”

We have here a beautiful emblem of Divine and spiritual life in its heavenly and eternal manifestation. The Father, its fountain head and source; the Son, its repository and channel; and the Spirit, its life-giving stream. From God in His sovereignty, through the Lamb in His atoning sacrifice, and by the Holy Ghost received by the glorified Christ.

The tree of life on either side of the river reminds us of the tree of life in the Garden of Eden, forfeited by our first parents at the Fall, and guarded by the cherubim with flaming sword. The forfeited right to eat of the tree of life has now been secured by the redemption which is in Christ Jesus (Rev. ii. 7, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in *the* midst of the paradise of God;” xxii. 14, “Blessed *are* they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life”).

The twelve fruits yielded every month are emblematic of those fruits, excellences, and perfections of the Spirit of God, which will be brought forth and manifested in all their fulness, variety, and suitability by the glorified redeemed throughout all ages.

The leaves of the tree being for the healing of the nations clearly shows that this vision of the holy city is connected with Millennial times, for in the new earth there will be no need of healing; “And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain” (Rev. xxi. 4). Compare also Ezek. xlvii. 12—“*the leaf thereof for medicine.*” The risen saints, by the grace and teaching of the eternal Spirit, will minister to the spiritual health and blessing of the nations of the Millennial earth.

Verses 3, 4. “And there shall be no more curse: but [and] the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His

servants [bought or bond servants] shall serve [religiously serve] Him: and they shall see His face; and His name *shall be* in [on] their foreheads."

Christ having been made a curse for them, there remains nothing but pure, unmixed, and eternal blessing, not only sin, but all the consequences of sin, having been removed for ever.

God and the Lamb the temple in which they worship, and the throne of God and of the Lamb established in their midst, they dwell in God, and God in them.

This is the hope of God's calling, which the Spirit of wisdom and revelation alone can make known to the soul, even the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints. Thus constituting the Church the body of Christ, and "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. i. 15-23).

The servants of God, redeemed and purchased by the blood of the Lamb, shall be for ever engaged in His holy and happy service in His immediate presence, where there is fulness of joy; no longer seeing Him by means of a mirror, obscurely, but "face to face" (1 Cor. xiii. 12).

They see the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ in fulfilment of His request in John xvii. 24. "Father, I will that ~~they~~ also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory which Thou gavest me, for Thou lovedst Me before *the* foundation of *the* world. This glory will be fully manifested by the Spirit of all truth, "the Spirit of glory and of God;" and, as the result, they will reflect the glory on which they gaze. Thus they will be known everywhere and by all as the children of God, the bride of the Lamb, indwelt, sanctified, and blended into one by the Spirit of the Father and the Son.

Verse 5. "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle [lamp], neither light of *the* sun; for *the* LORD [Jehovah] God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

With God is the fountain of life, and they that follow the Lamb shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. In God's light they see light (Ps. xxxvi. 9); and this light is unchanging and eternal, for with Him there is "no variableness, nor shadow of a turning."

Having God and the Lamb for their eternal portion, possessed and realised through the eternal Spirit, they are independent of external sources of satisfaction and enjoyment; to them God is all in all.

They will not only share with Christ the Millennial kingdom, but

in the new heavens and the new earth they will reign with Him as long as eternal ages roll.

Verses 6, 7. "And he said unto me, 'These sayings *are* faithful and true: and *the* LORD [Jehovah] God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants *the* things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.'"

God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets—Who in these last days spake unto us by His Son, and in the inspired epistles by His Spirit—has given us a further revelation of His mind, by the instrumentality of the angel who was employed to communicate by signs or symbols the contents of the prophecy of this book.

Thus He gives us instruction in further and fuller detail concerning those great and solemn events which will transpire in the interval between the coming of the Lord Jesus to receive His saints and His manifestation in glory with them; also the Millennial period; the passing away of former things; the new heavens and the new earth; and the commencement of the eternal state.

Jehovah God Himself puts the stamp of truth on this most sacred portion of His holy word; and then the Lord Jesus pronounces a blessing on those who keep "the words of the prophecy of this book." He at the same time reminds us that our one and special hope is His personal return, for He would have us ever watching with girded loins and well trimmed lamps, ready to welcome Him. Meanwhile, the knowledge of the things which are coming to pass on the earth, revealed to us in their ultimate issues, will be found of infinite value in furnishing practical lessons for present guidance whilst watching and waiting for Him. The knowledge of what ritualism will become when fully developed in Babylon the Great is the best preservation from its subtle ensnarements now.

The realisation of what the lawlessness of the present age will culminate in, as headed up in "the lawless one" and kingdom of the beast, may well deter us from meddling in political strife (Prov. xxiv. 21).

Then, again, being forewarned of what "the opposition of science, falsely so called" will lead to, when perfected by the false prophet, will assuredly keep us steadfast and immovable in abiding by the truth of God as contained in the sacred and inspired Scriptures.

Verses 8, 9. "And  John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship

before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, 'See *thou do it* not : for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book : worship God.'"

An angel was sent to show John the visions which are recorded in this book, and through him, and by him the Lord Jesus spake. This angel was only an instrument employed, and also a fellow-servant of those who obey the word of God. He therefore utterly disclaims the worship proffered to him. The Triune God—Father, Son, and Spirit, the one true God—is the only rightful object of religious worship.

Verses 10-12. "And he saith unto me, 'Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book : for the time is at hand. He that is unjust [unrighteous], let him be unjust still ; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still ; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still ; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly ; and My reward is with Me, to give every man *according* as his work shall be.'"

In the time of Daniel prophecy was shut up and sealed until the time of the end, except to such as were taught of God (Dan. xii. 4, 9, 10). But the Book of the Revelation is not a sealed book ; it is plain and simple, and the emblems employed are, for the most part, easily intelligible.

The night is far spent and the day is at hand. As the coming of the Lord draws nearer and nearer, the light of the coming dawn grows brighter. "Coming events cast their shadows before," so that we see the day approaching. The three first chapters of the Revelation have been expounded to us by the history of the Church and its present condition ; and the character of coming events is clearly foreshadowed by what we see and hear from day to day.

When the Lord Jesus shall come, and "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," shall take to Himself those who have the earnest and seal of the Spirit, that moment will be a solemn and decisive period in the experience of thousands, fixing unalterably their future state. Then those who "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," up to that time, "but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 10, 11), will be given over to the delusions of Antichrist and the belief of his lie, and to share his judgment.

The coming of the Lord will also terminate the time of service

here, giving emphasis to the exhortation to "work while it is called to-day;" for when He comes it will not only be to receive His people to Himself, to set them in His presence, but also to place them before His judgment-seat. He will come not only as Bridegroom to receive His bride, but as Lord to take account of His servants. Then, when the secrets of all hearts are made manifest, shall every one receive his own reward, according to his own labour.

Verse 13. "I am Alpha and Omega, *the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*"

The Scriptures are the word of God, the testimony of the Father concerning the Son, written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The summing up and the substance of that word is to be found in Christ: all its promises are Yea and Amen in Him; its various types and shadows find their accomplishment and reality in Him—the true and living Word—Who, coming forth from the bosom of the Father, hath declared [told out] God.

Verse 14. "Blessed *are* they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

The Book of the Revelation opens with a blessing (chap. i. 3)—"Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of *this* prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand." This blessing is repeated in chap. xxii. 7—"Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Again in the verse before us—"Blessed *are* they that do His commandments." There is another Greek reading here—"Blessed are they that wash their robes." The first reading appears more in harmony with the structure of the book, yet both are true, for "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent," and to "believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ;" and "blessed are they that wash their robes," but this can only be done by repenting and believing in Jesus.

The right to the tree of life in Paradise was forfeited through disobedience at the first, and the flaming sword of the cherubim guarded the way of return; but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the will of God, gives a title to everlasting life, and admits into association with the redeemed in glory—the church of the firstborn written in heaven.

Verse 15. "For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whore-

mongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

What a contrast between within the city and without. Within all is bright, all is pure, all is holy, all is true; "without" all is dark, all is unholy, all is false. Faith in God's testimony of truth admits within; the rejection of God's truth, and the reception of Satan's lie, leaves the soul without, in the blackness of darkness for ever.

Verse 16. "'I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and [the] morning star.'"

In the epistles to the seven churches in Asia (chaps. ii, iii.) the Lord Jesus assumes a distinct title when addressing each particular church, but to each address is added the exhortation, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;" for the instruction given is for the benefit of the whole Church. At the same time it is for individual warning, exhortation, and profit; but in order to this there must be the hearing ear—that is, the spiritual mind and understanding, the capacity to hear the Spirit's voice (see 1 Cor. ii. 9–16). Human intellect is insufficient, the opinions of men mainly mislead; the Spirit's voice must be listened to, as well as the words which He has written carefully pondered. The written word is not sufficient without the Spirit's voice.

The titles here assumed by the Lord Jesus in addressing the churches are "the Root and the Offspring of David," and "the Bright and the Morning Star." He is David's Lord, as well as David's Son (Ps. cx. 1). This title expresses His Divine glory, and also His human condescension, as both "the Root and the Offspring of David."

As David's Lord, universal empire is His; as David's Son, He claims the throne of Israel and of the world (Ps. lxxii.). As the Root and the Offspring of David, His manifestation in glory will be universally apparent: He will come with clouds, and every eye shall see Him. Upon a sleeping and benighted world that day will come as a thief in the night; but unto them that fear the name of Jehovah, the godly remnant of Israel in that day, "shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. iv. 2).

"And what a sunrise will that advent be!"

But unto His waiting and expectant Church He will previously have appeared as the Bright and the Morning Star; and, as the morning star cannot be seen after the sun is risen, we are thus instructed and

warned not to confound together the coming of the Lord Jesus to receive His saints to Himself with the appearing of the Son of Man when He will be manifested with them. When He arises on the world as the Sun of Righteousness, His raised, changed, and glorified saints will appear with Him in glory.

Verse 17. "And the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let him that heareth say, 'Come.' And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

On the announcement of the title, "I am the Bright and the Morning Star," the Spirit in the Church responds to Him who makes it, "Come." Those composing the Church on earth who realise their position and relationship as the bride of the Lamb respond, "Come." At the same time they are desirous that those believers who have not known their relationship as such should join with them in their invitation—that the slumbering virgins should be awakened to welcome the returning Bridegroom: that the response from the universal Church to their common Lord should be, "Come, Lord Jesus."

Meanwhile, a sense of the nearness of His approach, of the shortness of the time, and of the stupendous issues involved, under the leadings of the Spirit, will prompt every earnest believer to desire that the thirsting should come to the waters of life; and not only that the anxious should be decided, but that whosoever will might be a partaker of eternal life; realising in fellowship with their Lord that the apparent slackness in fulfilling His promise is really in mercy, and that the longsuffering of their Lord is salvation.

Verses 18, 19. "For I testify unto every *man* that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any *man* shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any *man* shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of *the* book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."

There is no portion of the sacred Scriptures which requires to be handled with more holy caution and godly fear. It is specially needful for him who would expound the Book of Revelation neither to add to or take from the things which are written therein, but in simplicity and godly sincerity seek to commend himself unto God as a workman needing not to be ashamed, but by manifestation of the truth commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Verse 20. "He that testifieth these things saith, 'Surely I come quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The Lord Jesus would ever keep the hope of His return before the eye of His believing people as the one bright object of their expectation and desire. It is by no means a question of time. Astronomy teaches that there are ninety-five millions of miles between the sun and the spectator; but so long as there is nothing between, its full brightness and warmth are experienced, notwithstanding the distance; but any object intervening, whether large or small, will intercept the brightness and diminish the warmth. Even so with the hope of the Lord's return: so long as it is regarded as the Lord ever presents it—as the next thing to be expected, and the first object of desire—the brightness and the power of the hope are experienced; but anything whatever put between, whether Antichrist or the tribulation, takes off the brightness and nullifies the power.

We notice that in this closing testimony of the Lord Jesus, "Surely I come quickly," the word of promise is in the present tense, not in the future—"I come," not "I will come;" and it is ever so. In John xiv. 3 His words are, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself" (see *Greek*). He ever puts but the twinkling of an eye between His going away and His coming to receive His saints, as the next object of expectation and desire; although the Lord foresaw the interval, and would have His people prepared for patient waiting. This is intimated in those words of the parable, "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them" (Matt. xxv. 19). His word to each and all is, "Watch;" "Be as men that wait for their lord." It is the evil servant that saith in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming" (Matt. xxiv. 48). And it is the strange woman that puts off the expectation of the return to a future and calculated period, saying, "The goodman *is* not at home, he is gone a long journey: he hath taken a bag of money with him, *and* will come home at the day appointed" (Prov. vii. 19, 20). The true-hearted disciple, to these last and closing words of the Saviour, "Surely I come quickly," responds, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Verse 21. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen."

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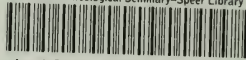
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